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ABSTRACT

Before citizen participation in administrative decision-making can be evaluated in a way that is both rigorous and relevant to policy development, there must be some minimal consensus among evaluators and policy-makers concerning the types of questions that should be asked and the methodologies that should be used. This document consists of edited versions of 10 papers addressing the development of adequate methods and models for such evaluations. The papers were originally presented at a national symposium on citizen participation held in Washington, D.C. in February, 1980. The first four papers discuss the views of public officials and citizen leaders on the need for evaluation studies and on the types of information that would be most useful to obtain. The next two papers review existing evaluation research, including that on the quality of participation processes and techniques and that on the impact of these processes on decision-making. The last four chapters examine the views of federal program managers on the utilization of evaluation studies in designing citizen participation processes. (Author/PGD)

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WORKING PAPER SERIES

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: MODELS AND METHODS OF EVALUATION

Nelson Rosenbaum, Editor

1981

Center for Responsive Governance
Washington, D.C.

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INTRODUCTION

Nelson Rosenbaum
Center for Responsive Governance

Citizen participation in administrative decision-making has become widely institutionalized over the last decade. At the federal level, citizen participation processes are no longer limited to experimental social programs or regulatory agencies but extend throughout the operations of government. Even more striking is the degree to which requirements for citizen participation have diffused to the state, regional, and local levels of government. Through federal grant-in-aid requirements, as well as mandates incorporated in state statutes and local ordinances, citizens have far greater opportunities to participate in the administrative processes of their state and local governments than they enjoyed a decade ago.

The commitment to citizen participation does not come cheaply. New processes and procedures for involving citizens in the administrative activities of government require substantial amounts of staff time as well as direct expenditures. Perhaps even more significantly, citizen participation adds to the time necessary for reaching decisions. thus undercutting the ability of government to respond quickly and flexibly to emerging problems.

This is not to say that the costs exceed the benefits. Based upon existing research, there is no way to confirm this oft-repeated criticism. However, neither can we say that the benefits exceed the costs. Existing evaluative research is also inadequate to confirm this proposition. The reality is that we know very little about the costs and benefits, the strengths and weaknesses of citizen participation in government. This makes it very difficult to conduct a reasoned debate about the effectiveness of existing processes and about appropriate directions for future initiatives.

The thesis of this volume is that the time has come to elevate the policy debate on citizen participation through serious, sustained evaluation of the effectiveness of alternative processes and methods. Evaluative research will not resolve <u>all</u> the issues, since many conflicts over citizen participation are grounded upon different interpretations of democracy and different values. Yet to continue the policy debate solely on the ground of value conflict (i.e., citizen participation as the mother's milk of democracy vs. citizen participation as the subverter of governmental efficiency and stability) is pointless without relatively hard information on how specific methods and procedures bear upon these values. In essence, given the increasing centrality of participation in the administrative process, we can no longer afford <u>not</u> to

evaluate citizen participation.

Before citizen participation processes can be evaluated in a rigorous, policy-relevant way, there must be some minimal consensus among investigators and policy-mekers upon the types of questions that should be asked and the methodology through which those questions should be answered. No such consensus now exists nor has there been any effort to stimulate increased interest in evaluation research on citizen participation. The purpose of this volume is to move researchers and officials closer to a common understanding of the models and methods of evaluation that might be most appropriate and useful in resolving some of the outstanding questions about the impact and effectiveness of citizen participation.

The volume is organized as follows. The first four chapters, constituting Part A, present the views of public officials and citizen leaders on the need for evaluation studies and on the types of evaluative information that would be most useful in policy debate. The two chapters comprising Part B review the existing state of evaluation research on different aspects of citizen participation: 1) the quality of participation processes and techniques; 2) the impact of those processes and techniques upon decision-making. The last four chapters, comprising Part C, present the perspectives of federal program managers on the utilization of evaluation studies in designing and operating citizen participation efforts.

The chapters in this volume are revised and edited versions of papers first presented at a national symposium on citizen participation held in Washington, D.C. on February 4, 1980. The symposium was co-sponsored by the Center for Responsive Governance and the Federal Inter-agency Council on Citizen Participation. The symposium was underwritten by a consortium of eight federal agencies, each of which operates a substantial number of programs incorporating citizen participation requirements: Appalachian Regional Commission; Army Corps of Engineers; Food and Drug Administration; U. S. Forest Service; Department of Health, Education and Welfare; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Department of Labor; Department of Transportation. The financial contributions were coordinated through a grant from the Community Services Administration, the federal agency which has taken the most sustained interest in the concept of citizen participation. Without the extraordinary efforts of the CSA project manager, Ms. Nancy Pettis, and the support of Drs. Robert Clark and Robert Landmann, neither the symposium nor this volume could have been produced. My sincerest appreciation extends to each of them.

PART A--THE NEED FOR EVALUATION

Chapter 1

EVALUATION AND PROCEDURAL REFORM

Mark Goldberg
White House Office of Consumer Affairs

We have now reached a new stage in the development of the citizen participation movement--a stage in which we are asking, or at least asking more insistently, more frequently, a new set of questions. We know citizen participation is the right thing to do, but are we doing it right? Can we do it better? Just what impacts have citizen participation programs had--on government policies, on the policy-making process, on participants themselves? How can we enhance those impacts? What can we learn from our experience thus far?

One of the reasons that the need to evaluate citizen participation programs has become so apparent is simply that, in a relatively short span of time, the programs themselves have become so numerous. The last two decades have brought with them an extraordinary expansion of citizen access and citizen participation programs and requirements. According to figures compiled by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, of the federal grant programs that impose citizen participation requirements on recipients--requirements that have profoundly altered the way state and local governments do business--97 percent were enacted after 1960, and 81 percent after 1970. In 1960, only five of these programs existed; now, according to the ACIR, there are 155.

On first reflection, the situation might appear to be different as far as federal agency proceedings are concerned. After all, the basic framework for citizen participation in federal regulatory proceedings, the Administrative Procedures Act, has been around since 1946. By comparison with most of the grant program citizen participation requirements, that makes the APA seem almost prehistoric. But many of the supplementary rights and procedures we now take for granted are of much more recent vintage. The Freedom of Information Act, for example, which enormously increased the ability of the public to get at the information underlying government decisions, was not passed until 1966. The first public participation funding program--the one at the Federal Trade Commission--was not established until 1974. The Government-in-the-Sunshine Act, which opened up to the public the meetings of more than fifty federal agencies, was a product of 1977. And President Carter's executive orders to reform the regulatory process and to strengthen federal consumer affairs programs--both of which require agencies to take steps in support of citizen participation that are substantially beyond the

APA requirements--were issued in 1978 and 1979 respectively.

But, as everyone in this room well knows, we are not operating in a political vacuum. And so the proliferation of citizen participation requirements, and our attendant and corresponding desire as rational beings to assess their impact, is not the only reason why we need to do more in the way of evaluation. There is a second reason: We need to be ready with comparable, rigorous, and relevant evaluation studies when the critics of citizen participation programs ask us for evidence that these programs have done any good.

I don't want to be misunderstood on this point. I would not for a moment suggest that evaluation studies be constructed in a biased fashion designed to produce evidence of success. We need objective and reliable studies. Otherwise, they will be no good as guides to reform and refinement of citizen participation programs, and they will easily be dismissed if we adduce them in political debate. I am confident, however, that the citizen participation movement has nothing to fear from fair evaluations of these programs.

It seems to me that the paucity of systematic evaluation literature in this field together with the political sensitivity of citizen participation programs impose special responsibilities on those who conduct new evaluations. In many cases, researchers will find that they are conducting the first systematic assessment of the programs they have under study; the impact of that assessment will accordingly be magnified. The research report will become, like it or not, something of a political document; it will be cited prominently in discussions of the future direction of the program; it may even determine the fate of the program. What this means is that it is imperative that the highest standards of care, analytical quality, and fairness be observed. And it means that the write-up of the research findings must err on the side of full disclosure: the report should set out explicitly the assumptions upon which the evaluation was based; it should explain clearly--so non-specialists can understand--the nature and limitations of the methodology that was used; and it should identify and emphasize the boundaries of the research--if the study reflects participation regarding only one issue, for example, that should be made clear. These safeguards will help to ensure that the study will not be misinterpreted or misused.

One of the major issues looming just ahead is whether we are ready to undertake comprehensive reform of the citizen participation requirements attached to federal grant programs. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations recently recommended that the present set of program-specific procedural requirements be replaced with across-the-board standards of performance. The Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee has before it a bill that would set into motion the process of standardizing citizen participation requirements for federal grant programs. And the

Office of Management and Budget has convened an interagency task force that is considering, in a much more tentative way, the possibilities for comprehensive reform.

These several enterprises appear to be based upon the following postulates or perceptions:

--that citizen participation requirements vary from program to program, even within the same substantive areas, in ways that seem ad hoc and haphazard rather than designed, and that confuse state and local officials and citizen participants alike;

--that the citizen participation requirements attached to some grant programs are so detailed that they unduly infringe upon the administrative discretion of state and local governments and inhibit, or even preclude, the use of innovative citizen participation strategies;

--that the requirements in some cases are too weak, or too little adhered to, to do much good; and

--that there are many grant programs now without any citizen participation requirements, to which such requirements ought to be added.

Serious thought should be given to the questions raised by these forays into reform. Do we now have enough in the way of evaluation literature to make a convincing case for the need to initiate comprehensive reform of the citizen participation requirements associated with grant programs? Is standardization the appropriate way to proceed? Or do the variations from program to program--in the purposes of participation, in the objectives of the programs themselves, in the affected interests, and so on--counsel a more decentralized approach? Do we know enough about what works and what doesn't work to develop standards to govern citizen participation in all of these programs? I look forward to working with you as we seek answers to these crucial questions.

Chapter 2

EVALUATION AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION

David Cohen
Common Cause

I. THE NEED FOR PARTICIPATION

We can expect the present demand for public participation in government activities to intensify rather than diminish. Many citizen interests lack effective access to decision makers and are excluded from public decision-making processes. By seeking representation and participation, citizens are really asking to be included, to learn what is going on, to sit at an extended table when decisions are made. This is the heart of a system based on fair representation, and in which differing views have a chance to be heard and acted upon.

Representative government has to be accountable to its citizens. That's a given in a democracy. Accountability as an idea is gaining verbal acceptance, but it should be given more than lip service. A political system that is accountable will improve citizens' access to their institutions in ways that will alter existing power relationships. Letting citizens know what's going on, letting them participate in the process, and building competition into our political system are three necessary conditions if our elected and appointed officials are to be part of an accountable system.

At present, government policy on domestic issues is made in an institutional setting that undermines accountability. It emphasizes a type of participation that requires sufficient financial resources to advocate a point of view, and it encourages the expression of views that are often narrowly based. Economic, occupational, and regional interests, as well as local and state governments, have proliferated to the point that we are living in a special interest state. These interests concentrate on pursuing their own immediate agendas, without considering their impact on others.

The results are harmful to citizens, whose votes and influence are diluted by those who spend millions on advocacy. This special interest influence extends far beyond any single issue to cover a wide range of government actions--administrative and regulatory matters, service delivery questions, and even the physical conditions of our committees.

A number of studies in recent years have documented the

degree to which citizens are still left out of government decision making. A 1977 study of "Public Participation in Regulatory Agency Proceedings" by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs found that "in agency after agency participation by the regulated industry predominates--often overwhelmingly. Organized public interest representation accounts for a very small percentage of participation before federal regulatory agencies. In more than half of the proceedings, there is no such participation whatsoever."

An October 1976 study on "Federal Regulation and Regulatory Reform" by the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce found that among nine regulatory agencies "all suffer from a critical defect, an insufficient response to the public they were created to serve."

A Common Cause study of the Department of Energy published in February 1979 examined the balance of participation in proceedings of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission during the period from October 1, 1977, to October 1, 1978. The data showed that in rule-making proceedings industry participants outnumbered public participants by a ratio of twelve to one and government participants by five to one. In adjudicatory proceedings the industry to public ratio was fifteen to one. The investigation also found that industry advocates its position with greater intensity--submitting more data and documents--than do public representatives.

If people's perception of government is to change, citizens must be able to know what is going on and to participate in the political process. Building genuine citizen participation into our administrative system will encounter resistance each step of the way. Yet effective citizen participation would improve the performance of all areas of government activity.

II. THE ROLE OF EVALUATION

A casual look at federal programs finds over 100 different citizen participation programs, yet for all practical purposes we know little about how these programs actually work. Because the effectiveness of existing citizen participation plans is not properly evaluated, the concept is not taken seriously. It is important to ensure that existing citizen participation programs are carefully and thoroughly evaluated. As the basis for future change effective evaluation of present programs should serve as a principal tool to create institutional change. We need to know what works, judged by performance criteria: For example:

1. Does a system give a voice to those who would not be heard from in administrative matters?

2. Does it result in an improved quality of services?

3. Does it experiment with new public-private-independent sector arrangements to help solve problems and provide responsible officials with information and experience that they otherwise would not have?

Several current legislative issues illustrate the need for evaluation.

1) A system of intervenor funding for administrative hearings would enable constituencies that are affected by government decisions but lack the funds to intervene to get the funds needed to represent their interest in a professional way. At the same time, efforts to subsidize public representation raise important policy questions about the role of the independent sector and the impact such subsidies would have. Obviously, such legislation must guard against the problem of the "kept critic." An agency other than the one the intervenor appears before must be responsible for the funding.

The current intervenor funding programs of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and other agencies have proven to be valuable, not only to the general public but also to small businesses. While these programs have had some minor start-up problems, most difficulties have been dealt with. Since 1975, the FTC's public participation funding program has facilitated participation in FTC proceedings by seventy geographically and philosophically diverse small businesses, trade associations, public interest groups, and individuals. These groups were able to present viewpoints which otherwise would not have been represented in the FTC decision-making process and whose presence was important to a fair resolution of the issues being considered.

The experiences of the FTC and other agencies in seeking and selecting participants, and in other areas, should be used to shape a government-wide public participation program. This is an area where good evaluation studies of existing programs can make a difference.

2) Another useful approach to enhance citizen participation would be the creation of a central ombudsman or public advocate in the executive branch. This office would not take over the handling of all complaints but would play an oversight and monitoring role with respect to complaint handling by federal agencies. Such an office should be highly visible and accessible to the public and independent of other agencies.

Several states have already recognized the need for such an office to promote prompt and responsive redress of citizen grievances. In New Jersey, for example, a cabinet-level Department of Public Advocate has been created with a Division of Citizen Complaints. Twelve other states have created some form

of independent ombudsman office. State governments can serve as a useful arena for innovation in citizen participation, by serving as a laboratory from which the federal government can learn. But, in order to fulfill this function, we must have good evaluation studies of state experiences.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Government needs to know what citizens think and what their priorities are. Effective citizen participation requires openness in government. Where decisions are made in secret--and where even the decision-making process is veiled in secrecy--citizens cannot gain sufficient information to play an effective role, and government cannot know what citizens think and what their priorities are.

One goal of citizen participation should be to find out what people think before government makes decisions that affect their lives. Such citizen involvement can help to strengthen the decision-making capacity of our representative institutions. Identifiable interests ought to have an opportunity to be represented. This means recognizing that citizen participation does not provide exclusive turf rights. Representation must be pluralist. That is especially important in matters that do not involve regulatory agencies. Federal officials need to learn how to huddle and confer with citizens, not just those with economic power or those who shout at a high decibel level. Government officials should pay attention to independent groups that have enough members with effective leaders who carry through on commitment fairly negotiated and bargained.

We need multiple modes for public participation--including random polling, newspaper surveys, focussed interviews and conversations. Together, all of these techniques, and others can help make known the views of the various publics. They can also suggest ways to frame choices that will make it possible to reach agreements on improving the quality of services delivered and the performance of government.

The goal in enhancing the stake of individual citizens in the American community is to show that the American government belongs to its citizens. We need to demonstrate that the soured relationship between citizens and our public institutions can change. Citizen participation is part of our public freedom. It is a way of getting us past looking out for Number One.

As citizens, our goals should be to overcome the constant efforts of narrow interests to block the public good and to strengthen the role citizens play in shaping public policy. In doing so, we will also be strengthening the whole--the public's interests--against the individual parts--the special interests.

Today, in our complex society, major issues tend to be resolved simply by technical answers to technical problems, so that value choices get short shrift. An elite of experts shuts out citizens from the decision-making process, even those who are knowledgeable. As citizens who believe in the informed consent of the governed, we rightly expect to have a part in influencing our government.

People do want to see a connection between their hopes and their daily activities. We want time for family and play when we are not earning a living. But we don't want to be ignored. We are not a silent majority nor are we drop-outs. As citizens we have good practical sense. We will accept changes that we understand and believe are fair. Involving citizens and creating ways to participate is crucial if we are to build a caring society that has an outlook that goes beyond self, that treats its problems by not ducking them but dealing with them. Such an approach will build the sense of community and shared responsibility we so badly need.

Chapter 3

EVALUATION FROM THE CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE

Ruth J. Hinerfeld
League of Women Voters of the United States

The stated purpose of the League of Women Voters is "to promote political responsibility through the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and to act on selected governmental issues." The League caught on early that traditional forms of citizen participation--voting and advocacy--were only part of the ball game. League members noticed that laws the League had supported were not being enforced by the officials responsible, or were being implemented at cross-purposes to their legislative intent. So, League members developed other methods, such as monitoring and litigation, to effect the way the laws were carried out. One of the best known of these methods is the League observer corps. Leagues use observers regularly to attend government meetings and report on what they have heard and seen. Leagues have discovered that the mere presence of a nonpartisan note-taker can help keep public officials on the public accountability track. Watchdogging the executive operations of government has also paid off in unforeseen ways. One southern League, for example, found that the thorough knowledge of personalities and procedures, both formal and informal, its observers had gained through regular attendance at county board of education meetings made the League a formidable community force when it negotiated with the reluctant school board about compliance with federal civil rights legislation.

Given the League's history, its purpose and its methods, it should come as no surprise that the League is solidly in favor of federal mandates that include citizen participation in local government implementation of federally funded programs. And wherever these programs are to be found, Leagues will be found to be involved in them. For example, local Leagues have monitored the administration of Community Development Block Grant Programs; they have monitored the use of funds in the CETA and Coastal Zone Management programs; and, in an EPA-funded project, state Leagues have worked with state planning agencies to encourage different sectors of the public to learn about and take part in water quality planning.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF), which is the educational arm of the League at the national level, has also been working to increase the skills and abilities of League members to participate in these programs. The LWVEF recently surveyed all 1,400 local and state Leagues for their impressions of the impacts of federal mandates to include local citizens in

decision making. What we've found will not, I'm sure, be new to professionals in the field. Here are some of the things we've found.

First of all, when Leagues talk about "effective" citizen participation, they mean that the public is able to state its case or present its perspective on the matters at issue to decision makers; and the decision makers, in turn, incorporate this citizen input into their decision making.

Not surprisingly, League members tell us that a principal gauge for measuring the effectiveness of citizen participation is the extent to which the final decision reflects what they had recommended. Most members realize that they can't win every battle; but what they expect, at the least, are decision makers who are open and available to the views and information provided by the public and who can honestly explain the reasons behind their decisions. Therefore, Leagues believe that a major factor in determining the effectiveness of citizen participation programs is the attitude of the official with the decision-making authority. The sure way to turn people ON is to decide in their favor. And really paying attention to them works well, too. The never-fail way to turn people OFF is to make them feel worthless. A Maryland Leaguer told us angrily: "Why should I take time off from work to sit in an advisory meeting, when the official whom I'm supposed to be advising doesn't care enough to attend?"

Second, citizen participation programs must take account of the limited amount of time and energy which citizens can expend in civic activity. These days, not only gold and gasoline but citizen time and energy are becoming increasingly precious. Although sociologists tell us there's no real lessening of the number of people who are volunteering to work for specific causes and issues, Leagues across the country have been telling us that it is getting harder and harder to find nonprofessionals--interested and concerned lay citizens--who can, and are willing to, take the time to become involved with and knowledgeable about the details and regulations of federal programs. You know as well as I how difficult it is to find a hearing--on general revenue sharing, for example--where more than a few interested members of the public attend. And we all know how quickly people quit a task--paid or unpaid--when they feel overburdened.

In this way, Leagues are saying that one of the major things those of you who are designing and evaluating citizen participation programs should consider is the burden placed on citizens. Designers of citizen participation programs should ask themselves, for example, if it is realistic to expect that there will be sufficient numbers of interested citizens who can master the intricacies of federal funding, and then proceed to monitor the program's implementation. Evaluators of citizen participation should check to see if the citizen participation burden was such that it chilled, rather than encouraged, participation.

A third lesson is that volunteers--even those who already know far more about the program they are monitoring than the average citizen--have a continuing need for technical assistance and management support from professionals. Volunteers need training and advice--not only in the use of their research instruments and in program technicalities, but also on how to organize a monitoring committee, how to assign and coordinate work, how to get available help from other local organizations, and how to follow up to see that assigned work is completed.

Finally, Leagues like participation programs and procedures that are clearly defined and close-ended. Specifically, League members say, the most effective participation programs are:

--those in which an exact charge is given to the citizen participants (for example: Where should the new sewer plant be built?);

--those in which citizens have clear, easily understood tools available;

--those which have a definite completion date.

In our survey, League members identified helath planning as the program with which they are the most dissatisfied, probably because it is almost exactly the opposite of the kind of discrete, concrete effort they most prefer. A health planning board has a continuing, ongoing responsibility, not a single specific charge. Citizen members don't have tools they can understand quickly; instead, they need to develop a broad background in many policy areas and a level of technical expertise not usually found in consumer members of health services.

These observations, impressions and lessons derived from League experiences are just the tip of the iceberg. I know that League members, given the chance, would welcome the opportunity to cooperate with rigorous, scientific--but not, I hasten to add, overly burdensome--evaluations of citizen participation. And I believe that the League network offers social science researchers a treasure trove of information on citizen participation. We look forward to a sustained and mutually rewarding effort that will result in effective citizen participation that lives up to all our expectations.

Chapter 4

EVALUATION AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

Esther Peterson
Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs

It seems to me that this conference should mark the beginning of a heightened concern for systematic analysis of the impact of citizen participation programs and procedures. We now have what amounts to an identified network of people who share that concern. What we need now is a cooperative effort to move forward to share information and ideas, to develop together a more extensive body of technically proficient, analytically sophisticated evaluations.

The need for such evaluations is heightened by an effort we now have underway to increase dramatically the opportunities for citizen participation in federal agency decision making. What I am referring to is the executive order issued by President Carter last September to strengthen agency consumer affairs programs. The order establishes, for the first time, tough government-wide standards for agency consumer affairs activities. Each agency is required to develop a consumer program that includes the following five elements:

--a professional consumer affairs staff authorized to participate on behalf of consumer interests in the development and review of all agency rules, policies, programs, and legislation;

--effective procedures for participation by consumers themselves in the development and review of all agency rules, policies, and programs;

--development of informational materials for consumers;

--consumer affairs training for agency staff members and, where appropriate, technical assistance to consumers and their organizations; and,

--procedures for systematically investigating and responding to consumer complaints, and for incorporating analysis of those complaints into the development of agency policies.

The standards for each of these elements are briefly set out in the order.

The order requires each agency to designate a senior-level official to coordinate and oversee agency consumer affairs

activities and to report directly to the head of the agency. In addition, agencies are to submit separate budget data for their consumer affairs programs so that the adequacy of expenditures on those programs can be addressed. In short, this order will give consumer affairs activities the clout, the visibility, the standards, and the tools that are needed to assure that government better serves consumer needs.

Focusing more specifically on participation procedures, the order provides that:

--Each agency has to establish procedures for the early and meaningful participation by consumers in the development and review of all agency rules, policies, and programs. The most important thing to note here is that for most agencies, the creation of participation procedures for decision-making processes other than rule making will be a major break with the past--something they've never done before.

--The participation procedures established by each agency must include provisions to assure that consumer concerns are adequately considered and analyzed in decision making.

--Agencies are to hold forums at which consumers can meet with agency decision makers.

--Agencies are required to make extra efforts to notify consumers of pending proceedings and of opportunities to participate in them. Such efforts might include, for example, special mailings or publication of notices in general circulation periodicals other than the Federal Register.

What implications does the order's citizen participation procedures have for evaluation studies? In the first place, it is important that the knowledge we already have--of particular programs, of particular techniques--be brought to bear on the shaping of final agency programs to comply with the executive order.

Second, the adoption of final consumer programs--which we expect will be published in the Federal Register in June--is not the end of the process set into motion by the executive order; it is just the beginning. We plan to work very closely with the agencies as they begin to implement the new procedures they will have adopted under the order. These new procedures will have to be refined, their details will have to be worked out, and, as experience under them accumulates, they will no doubt have to be modified over time. The need for systematic evaluations will be immense. Many agencies will be putting into place citizen participation procedures in areas of decision making where they never before existed--in the development and review of policies and programs outside of the rule-making process. Agencies will

be experimenting with new techniques; they will need guidance, they will need to know how the new techniques are working. And, as agencies begin for the first time to develop consumer program budget exhibits--to break out the amounts of money and personnel devoted to each of the five elements in the executive order, including citizen participation--they will have to come up with ways to determine what resource levels are necessary or appropriate.

In short, at least at the federal level, we may be entering a sort of Golden Age for public participation evaluation.

PART B--IMPROVING EVALUATION RESEARCH

Chapter 5

PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

Judy B. Rosener
University of California, Irvine

I. INTRODUCTION

Until the 1960s, citizen participation took place primarily in the context of partisan politics, civic activity by "good government" groups, and the individual petitioning of elected officials. The social programs of the sixties associated with the War on Poverty changed all this. Most of those programs mandated that citizens be involved in governmental decision-making in new ways. Thus the design and implementation of citizen participation programs became an issue of great interest to public officials and citizens alike.

In order to satisfy participation mandates, local officials at first responded cautiously by employing traditional participation processes (i.e., public hearings and advisory committees) except where specific techniques were required. Yet even with this limited kind of citizen involvement, public officials found themselves facing administrative uncertainty and a concommitant loss of control. Thus, they clamored for information which would help them decide which participation processes and techniques would reduce uncertainty and minimize their loss of control.

At the same time citizens welcomed the participation mandates as an opportunity to assert greater influence over policy-making and to prevent arbitrary bureaucratic behavior. However, they too discovered problems with the mandates. Primarily they found that many of the participation programs enacted by public agencies were pro forma and therefore ineffective, so citizens also developed an interest in assessing participation techniques.

In short, conflict and frustration over the participation mandates created a "market" for evaluation. The market remains largely unsatisfied due to the dearth of solid evaluative research on participation processes. The current participation literature includes studies which attempt to assess techniques and processes, yet almost all of these are flawed in significant ways. Very few studies have generated data on the effectiveness of techniques in the context of some specific set of user-oriented goals and objectives (Rosener, 1978). For the most part, existing evaluation studies are "after-the-fact" and lack support for a determination that there is a relationship between a technique and some

desired outcome. Even in those cases where cause and effect is the focus of analysis, the criteria for measuring effectiveness are not spelled out. To put it bluntly, "hidden assumptions" and inadequate methodology run rampant through most existing evaluations of citizen participation.

The effects of this lack of solid evaluative research are evident in the recent Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations report dealing with citizen participation (ACIR, 1980). Caught in the cross fire between local officials and citizens over citizen participation in the federal General Revenue Sharing Program, Congress requested that the ACIR examine the operational aspects of citizen participation in federal, state, and local government fiscal decision-making. Not surprisingly, the ACIR study (which focuses on many issues other than fiscal decision-making) was crippled from the start by a lack of empirical evaluation findings. Without a firm evaluative base, and no resources to do original evaluation research itself, the ACIR took the easy way out. It recommended that Congress do away with participation mandates requiring the use of specific techniques and processes, and that these be replaced by a general set of performance standards against which participation would be monitored and evaluated. However, the ACIR's suggested performance standards, i.e., "keeping decision-making open to public view," are so vague and nebulous that they make little contribution to the debate over the value of participation mandates. In short, the lack of good evaluation research prevented the ACIR from recommending anything meaningful with regard to citizen participation.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest some guidelines for improving evaluation studies of participation processes. To illustrate ways of making evaluation studies more comparable and more reliable, examples from recent evaluations undertaken by the author for the Army Corps of Engineers are used.

II. A USER-ORIENTED APPROACH

Is there some way to approach the evaluation of participation processes which will promote the articulation of "hidden assumptions," produce findings which can be compared, and result in reliable policy-relevant conclusions? I think there is. The discussion below is based on what we have learned from over a decade of experience with the evaluation of social action programs (Rossi and Wright, 1977).

What I have in mind is user-oriented evaluation, evaluation that rests upon the goals and objectives identified by participants or users of the participation process, the specification of criteria by which the goals and objectives can be measured, and the generation and testing of hypotheses about the relationship between the achievement of goals and variation in the processes being evaluated.

The major advantage of a user-oriented approach is that it forces specificity and it results in a clear picture of whose goals and objectives are being pursued. It indicates whether or not participation goals are achieved, and the basis for claiming achievement. Because of the specificity it requires, it is more conducive to the use of rigorous measurement than is a less explicit approach. It also increases the likelihood that evaluation findings will be used, because it recognizes the specific concerns of the users. Moreover, it facilitates the comparison of evaluation findings because it minimizes confusion over what is being measured.

The major disadvantage of this approach is that it may sacrifice the generalizability that results from using a common set of criteria. User goals may be similar enough from case to case, however, so that comparability is not completely lost. For example, if it is found that workshops are shown to be a way to generate effective citizen-government interaction (based on user-identified goals) and that the result of the use of a workshop is that public policies reflect stated public preferences, then one could conclude that the use of workshops increases the possibility that public policies will reflect public preferences. In other words, it will be possible, given a history of evaluations, to develop mid-range theory about the use of specific participation techniques.

Another difficulty with the user-oriented approach is the fact that presently there is no widely accepted measure which can be used to determine effectiveness given "goal dissensus" (a situation in which the goals and objectives of participating groups are divergent or in conflict). When goal dissensus occurs, determining the relative value of the various participant goals becomes a problem. Until recently, this problem has not been addressed, much less acknowledged, because the assessment of participation has been based on general criteria which have masked the goal differences between participants. Thus the need for some kind of "participation goal achievement measure" was avoided.

In a recent study of the use of workshops conducted for the Army Corps of Engineers, the author developed a participation effectiveness measure which involved the assignment of a value to goals based on how widely they were shared by participants (Rosener, 1980). The basic assumption underlying the measure is that those goals which are most widely held are the ones whose achievement is most important in determining effectiveness. This assumption is based on the democratic principle of majority rule. When goals held by more than one group (or two groups, depending on how many groups make up the participant sampel) are achieved, the participation process is considered effective. This approach focuses on the ability of some given participation technique to satisfy most of the participants (in terms of user-identified shared goals) as contrasted with approaches which focus on some set of imposed democratic theory criteria such as "represented-ness" of the participants, the availability of information, or

the fairness of the process. This "satisfycing measure" (March and Simon, 1958) assumes that it is not necessary that a participation activity satisfy all of the goals of all of the participants (which rarely happens anyhow), but rather that the goals shared by more than one participating group are the important ones and should be the basis of any effectiveness evaluation.

The user-oriented approach makes evaluation more complicated because it necessitates a great deal of specification. It rejects the notion that general evaluation criteria can be superimposed by evaluators without taking into consideration the goals of participants. Yet, given these constraints, the approach appears more likely to produce reliable evaluation results which satisfy the market for solid research than does an approach based on traditional democratic theory or the goals of one set of participants.

III. COMPONENTS OF THE APPROACH

Defining the Participation Setting

Basic to any evaluation of participation processes is information about which techniques are mandated or discretionary; which government agencies, interest groups, and individuals are affected; what kinds of resources are available or committed to the activity and the participants; the type of issues being debated; the scope of the issues; the approximate duration of the decision process; the skills needed for participation; and so on. These data define the participation setting and affect the kinds of participation goals and objectives which will emerge, as well as the ability of evaluators to obtain information needed for measuring their achievement. The first task, then, is to learn about the participation setting.

Identifying Citizen Participation Goals

The identification of the general goals of those who are involved in the use of a given technique is the next task in the evaluation. A number of different approaches can be used in determining goals: 1) in-depth interviews with individuals who indicate they will participate; 2) questionnaires given to all the participants; 3) evaluator observations of the behavior of the participants; and 4) a content analysis of documents and minutes. It is important that the goals be identified as early as possible in the participation process.

Specifying Citizen Participation Objectives

Specific objectives are determined in a fashion similar to the determination of goals (Mager, 1972). People are asked what it is they expect to happen or wish to happen as a result of the use of some technique, and how that in turn relates to the achievement of some or one generalized goal. The objectives are

in a sense concrete manifestations of the goals. They need to be clearly defined because it is they against which achievement is measured. The designation of objectives is an attempt to "define the undefinable, to tangibilitate the intangible--to help say what we mean by our important but abstract goals" (Rossi and Williams, 1972). The more specific the objectives, the more rigorous the methodology which can be employed, and the more reliable the findings. Objectives, like the goals, may be process or impact oriented. Generally objectives will differ among groups depending on the kind and scope of an issue. Once again, while the difficulty will come in reconciling these differences, the link between techniques and specific participation objectives will be revealed, and differences in expectations will become apparent as a result of having gone through the process of goal and objective analysis.

Defining Measurement Criteria

Given the goals and objectives of various participants, it is next necessary to define the criteria by which their achievement will be measured. Traditionally, crude measures such as the number of citizens in attendance or the representedness of the participants have been primary standards used in assessments of effectiveness. User-oriented evaluations go beyond these traditional types of criteria. There are no inherent limits upon the kinds and combinations of criteria which can be utilized. For example, in Ragan's study of fifteen Army Corps participation programs, he uses criteria such as "the extent to which recommended plans satisfy community expressed needs and desires" and "the extent to which the public participation is integrated into field office planning processes" (Ragan, 1975). In Wattenberg's study of the Minneapolis Citizens' Advisory Committee on Community Development, she lists as criteria such things as "the extent to which citizen participants learned to translate their information on the needs of their community groups into policy and program alternatives" (Wattenberg, 1975). The only limitation upon the choice of criteria is the ability of the researcher to obtain the necessary information which will make measurement possible.

Selecting Methodologies

Within the evaluation research framework various kinds of methodologies may be used for obtaining and analyzing data. The choice of methodology should be related to the kind of information desired by those asking for the evaluation. The need for rigor is a paramount concern, but rigor by itself has little value. The level of rigor utilized has to be viewed in the context of the needs of the evaluation audience, the resources available to the evaluator, and the acceptance of the methodology by those being evaluated as well as those who will use the evaluation data. The prime task of an evaluator in choosing a methodology should be to weigh its advantages and disadvantages in terms of the stated purpose of the evaluation and the kinds of information which are

desired, not merely in terms of rigor alone.

Presenting the Findings

With the user-oriented approach, findings take the form of statements about the relationship between specific goals and objectives and the techniques being assessed. How evaluation results are written up and communicated is almost as important as what they say. Social scientists tend to think and write in one form, public administrators in another, and citizens in still another. The trick is to make sure that the kind of information obtained, and the manner in which it is presented, will best suit those for whom it is intended.

It is also important in presenting data to be on the alert for unanticipated consequences which might otherwise be overlooked. Frequently a technique chosen to perform one function ends up performing another, or two techniques used in concert produce a behavior which neither by itself would produce. Keeping track of unanticipated consequences, while not a basic component of the user-oriented approach, adds to the value of any assessment effort.

Estimating Costs and Benefits

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in evaluating the costs and benefits of specific participation techniques is that some can be easily quantified and some cannot. There is a tendency on the part of evaluators to include costs and benefits to which numbers are easily affixed, and to exclude those to which numbers are difficult to apply. This usually ends up with the costs outweighing the benefits, since costs are easy to quantify and benefits frequently are not. How do you quantify trust in government, the generation of alternatives, interaction between public officials and citizens, or support for a program or policy? Most public officials admit that "citizen opposition" is a cost, but how should it be calculated with the most obvious costs of staff time, mailings, training, etc.? The question of how to assign priorities and values to participation costs and benefits is one for which there is no easy answer. But the articulation of costs and benefits, and the value premises which underly them need to be seen as an important part of any final determination about the effectiveness of a given participation technique.

Increasing Utilization

Peter Rossi has noted that the growth of evaluation studies stems from a commitment to orderly policy development in our society. At the same time, studies of the utilization of evaluation research suggest that evaluation findings have not exerted a significant influence on program decisions (Rossi and Williams, 1972). There are some ways in which those who evaluate participation techniques can contribute to an increased utilization of their findings. They can choose variables, methodologies, and report formats which are appropriate to the evaluation audiences

TABLE 1

SANIBEL WORKSHOPS

EFFECTIVENESS MATRIX: ARMY CORPS

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA FOR MEASURING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT	INDICATION THAT CRITERIA MET
Create a positive public image of the Corps.	Provide a mechanism for positive interaction between Corps personnel and affected citizens.	Indication of positive interaction between Corps personnel and participants.	Questionnaire data indicates positive interaction.
	Explain Corps responsibilities, and discretionary authority in its regulatory activities (general permit).	Indication that participants understand Corps responsibilities and discretionary authority, and the general permit process.	Observations of evaluator.
	Ask citizens to develop their own conditions for the general permit.	Indication that Corps will use the conditions developed by the participants.	Issuance of general permit with conditions developed by the participants.
Conduct a needs assessment with respect to the interior wetlands on Sanibel.	Find out what various interest groups want in the way of interior wetlands protection on Sanibel.	Indication that citizen concerns about protection of the wetlands identified and acknowledged by Corps.	Inclusion of citizen suggestions in the general permit.
	Find out what kind of general permit administration and enforcement are desired.	Indication that citizens expressed their concerns about administration and enforcement of the general permit and conditions.	Information on workshop "tear sheets" showing concerns.
Share decision making responsibility with citizens of Sanibel.	Provide a mechanism for integrating citizen ideas, alternatives and options into Corps regulatory actions.	Indication that ideas, options and alternatives suggested in the workshop are reflected in the conditions for the Sanibel general permit.	"Tear sheet" suggestions included in the general permit conditions.
Streamline permit process and provide certainty to land owners and public officials, and environmentalists.	Provide a mechanism where criteria can be developed which will allow the Corps to issue one permit rather than individual permits.	Indication that conditions developed in the workshops will generate support for the issuance of a general permit.	No demand for the Corps to hold a public hearing.
	Provide a forum to identify conflict and consensus prior to issuance of a general permit.	Indication that areas of conflict and consensus are identified.	Interview data and "tear sheet" information which indicate that conflicts and consensus were identified.
	Provide a forum for resolving conflict regarding future land use so that landowners will have certainty and resources will be protected.	Indication that land use conflicts are resolved thus ensuring that landowners are aware what they can and can't do, and when they need to obtain an individual permit when they come under the general permit.	Conditions developed in the workshops in response to questions of those who need to obtain a permit.
Facilitate permit enforcement.	Develop relationship with local government which will facilitate enforcement of the general permit and its conditions.	Indication of agreement between Sanibel City Council and Corps spelling out enforcement responsibilities of both.	Correspondence between the City Council and the Corps indicating a general agreement.
Train Corps personnel in participation techniques using experiential learning about the general permit process.	Expose Corps personnel who will be involved in regulatory activities to a real situation where citizens and Corps personnel can learn about the general permit process together, and where Corps personnel will act as neutral facilitators.	Indication that Corps personnel learned to act as neutral facilitators and were perceived by participants to have been effective in their workshop role at the same time that they and other participants learned about the general permit process.	Questionnaire data indicating that the Corps facilitators were viewed as neutral and that they and citizens learned about the general permit.
Development of a constructive alternative to the public hearing process.	Provide a mechanism other than the public hearing which can satisfy the general permit concerns of those who will be affected by issuance of a general permit.	Lack of citizen demand for a public hearing after issuance of the public notice for a general permit on Sanibel.	No requests for a public hearing.

TABLE 2

SANIBEL WORKSHOPS

EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHOPS: ENVIRONMENTALISTS

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA FOR MEASURING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT	INDICATION THAT CRITERIA MET
Protect the interior wetlands on Sanibel Island.	Agreement between the Corps and workshop participants as to what constitutes a wetland and what is meant by protection.	Maps which show clearly where the wetlands are which come under the general permit.	Maps prepared by Corps and City of Sanibel showing wetlands.
	Develop conditions which are restrictive enough to protect the wetlands.	General Permit conditions which are acceptable to environmentalists.	No opposition expressed by environmentalists.
	Develop conditions which are enforceable and an administrative process to ensure that enforcement will take place.	Assurance that Sanibel City Council or Corps will enforce conditions and indication of how administration and enforcement of the general permit conditions will take place.	Agreement between the city and the Corps to cooperate in the enforcement of conditions.
Share decision making responsibility with the Corps in its regulatory activities on Sanibel.	Provide a mechanism where citizens can help write the general permit conditions, and provide input into how the general permit should be administered and enforced.	Indications that the Corps general permit included conditions developed in the workshops, and that the Corps administrative and enforcement policy reflects the concerns expressed in the workshop.	General permit included conditions developed in the workshops. Concerns about the administration and enforcement of the general permit were acknowledged by the Corps and City officials.
Provide certainty to landowners about development in the wetlands, and settle the issue of wetlands protection on Sanibel.	Development of a general permit and conditions which clearly indicate what can and cannot be done in and near the interior wetlands, and when a landowner needs to obtain an individual permit.	Issuance of a general permit which clearly delineates whose land falls under the general permit and whose does not, and what can be done under the conditions of the general permit and what cannot be done.	General permit delineates lands which fall under the permit and conditions are clear.

they primarily serve. They can avoid the use of social science jargon and unnecessary statistical game-playing, which often preclude practitioners from accepting evaluation results. They can make recommendations that can be operationalized, which means paying attention to participation settings.

Even under these conditions, however, there is no guarantee that evaluations will be used. The use or non-use of evaluation findings is a political decision. As Linblom has opined, differences in values and value priorities constitute an inevitable limitation on the use of rational analysis, and evaluation findings are frequently used as a tactic in some political game rather than as a contribution to rational decision-making. Thus the utilization of evaluations is ultimately dependent on how their findings jibe with the political goals and objectives of those who request them.

IV. THE SANIBEL CASE

The user-oriented approach to evaluation can be illustrated by a recent study conducted by the author for the Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers. In mid-1979, the Corps conducted a series of workshops on Sanibel Island in Florida. The purpose of the workshops was to involve citizens and local officials in the development of a General Permit which would be issued by the Corps as a substitute for individual permits required under federal law for the dredging, filling, or development in publicly owned wetlands. An evaluation was undertaken as a means of providing the Corps with information about the value of workshops (Rosener, 1979). A similar evaluation was made of a workshop series in Southeast Florida (Rosener, 1980). The technique used previously by the Corps was to hold public hearings when requested on individual permits. Corps officials were interested in knowing whether or not holding one series of workshops in which citizens would develop a general permit would be a better participation procedure than holding a large number of public hearings when requested prior to the granting of individual permits.

Table 1 and 2 illustrate how the goals and objectives articulated by participants were used as the basis for the user-oriented evaluation. As is evident in the tables, the goals and objectives of both sets of participants (the Corps and the environmentalists) were achieved. There was goal dissensus, but since all of the goals were achieved, it was not necessary to weight them in order to obtain a "satisfycing" measure of effectiveness. The workshops were judged effective because all of the goals were achieved. Had this not been the case, it would have been necessary to weight the goals. In the case of Sanibel, only one goal was mentioned by both participating groups as being important. That goal was "the sharing of decision making responsibility." Using a "satisfycing" measure the achievement of this goal alone would have meant that the workshops were successful.

Even though the "satisfycing" measure focuses on shared goals, it does not preclude attention to other goals and a determination of how a given participation technique is associated with the achievement of goals which are not shared. The user-oriented approach therefore provides a tool for measuring overall effectiveness and at the same time can be used to evaluate the usefulness of a participation process in achieving the goals of various kinds of participant groups.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Employing the user-oriented evaluation approach in assessing participation processes may trade off generalizability, but at the same time it generates knowledge about how and when specific participation techniques contribute to the achievement of specific participation goals and objectives. When more reliable evaluation data is available, it may provide knowledge about how specific techniques are related to general democratic goals. In the meantime, the problem of goal dissensus and the complexity of the participation concept means that there will continue to be a need for some kind of judgment made by evaluators as to the proper criteria to use for effectiveness measurement. The user-oriented evaluation approach, together with some kind of "satisfycing" goal achievement measure, would seem to be one step in the right direction. Focusing on the participation goals and objectives articulated by the users of participation activities and developing ways to assign values to their goals and objectives will aid in our ability to compare participation techniques in various decision-making settings.

If we really believe that citizens should be afforded the opportunity to express their preferences, and that these preferences should be reflected in public policies, then it is important to know the extent to which specific techniques assist in this effort under different conditions. This will come about only when there is a systematic approach to evaluating participation activities. The user-oriented evaluation is offered as a possible approach.

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Chapter 6

POLICY IMPACTS

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One truth about public participation is well on the way to becoming a platitude without ever having been a reality. Virtually everyone familiar with public involvement in administration accepts the wisdom of discerning how such citizen activism affects administrative policy. But those who advocate such evaluation seem apostles of a church without a congregation. Why are believers so many, practitioners so few? A scarcity of competent evaluation is not unique to this aspect of participation. Commentators usually lament, as one expert did quite recently, that in general "systematic evaluation has been a rarity in participation programs" (Sewell and Phillips, 1979). But policy impact is a particularly impoverished domain of the literature and it need not be so.

The essential problem is not--as often asserted or implied--that practical research strategies and other technical assistance are lacking. To illustrate, this paper will use materials adapted primarily from current evaluation studies to suggest a serviceable design for evaluation, a simple but adaptable model of policy impact and some measurement options, all amenable to different agency needs. Many evaluation difficulties actually arise from an agency's reluctance to use such materials. Evaluating policy impacts from participation often raises nettlesome political and institutional issues for evaluators and their sponsors. These issues are not insurmountable but they should be confronted at a preliminary phase in research design. Indeed, they can often be resolved through an evaluation design. These issues are important enough to merit brief discussion before proceeding to the evaluation methods themselves.

I. SOME PRE-DESIGN ISSUES

Several problems arise predictably in evaluating policy impacts from citizen participation. Unfortunately, they can be tacitly ignored, if not unrecognized, in designing evaluations. They will tick away like time bombs until, at some late phase, they detonate to the consternation of somebody important.

The Vagueness of the Law

One major issue is that statutes, regulations and guidelines defining public involvement programs are frequently vague, ambiguous or silent about intended policy impacts. Typically, such docu-

ments concentrate upon prescriptions for the participation process: who is to be involved, how, when and by whom. The Housing and Community Development Act (1974) requires, for instance, that grant applicants certify that they "provided an adequate opportunity for citizen participation in the development of the application and for resident involvement in program activities" (ACIR, 1978; 1979). The Department of Energy's new Energy Extension Service is required by legislation and regulation to provide an opportunity for participation in its program by "state, county, and local officials, state universities, colleges, cooperative extension services, community service action agency and other public or private organizations involved in active energy outreach programs" (ACIR, 1979). It is hardly surprising that what purports to be impact evaluation often turns out to be an analysis of participation procedures, not their effects; it is often easier to concentrate upon whatever goals may be explicitly prescribed. However, the vagueries of policy impact need not be as formidable an obstacle to evaluation as is often described. Some times formal documents do suggest a definition of policy objectives. For instance, the EPA's Final Regulations for public participation under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act include the following objectives for all affected agencies:

> To assure that . . . the government fully considers the public's concerns;
>
> To assure that the government does not make any significant decision . . . without consulting interested and affected segments of the public;
>
> To assure that government action is as responsive as possible to public concerns. (EPA, 1979)

It should be possible for evaluators to determine if a specific set of agency decision makers "considered" some public concerns, or "consulted with interested and affected segments of the public," or attempted to "respond" to public concerns. Here are three evaluation criteria amenable to operational definition, measurement and generalization. Even if policy impact goals are inexplicit, it is usually feasible for evaluators and agency personnel to create a list of acceptable ones. The point is that regulations, guidelines and even statutes can often be helpful when the will and imagination is available to investigate their utility.

Political and Institutional Risks

There is often an implicit trade-off between the quality of an evaluation and political risks to an agency contemplating such an evaluation (Weiss, 1977; 1979). The issue of participation's impact upon policy is likely to be considered a fundamental measure of its value and, consequently, any document purporting to provide an "answer" of sorts will be critically reviewed by interests important

to an agency. The more competent the evaluation--that is, the better it is able to define policy impacts with clarity and reliability--the more it forces conflicts over the nature of impacts to surface. Agencies sometimes have powerful incentives for repudiating an impact evaluation, or severely qualifying its validity. Many of these incentives need to be frankly recognized and anticipated in the design of a policy evaluation. The customary risks are several:

1. All participation programs, like other governmental endeavors, fail in some respect. A program will surely fall short of the expectations of some major actors or vested interests in the process: agency personnel, clientele groups, White House or congressional interests, state or local officials--the list of the potentially aggrieved is always generous. A competent evaluation will often throw deficiencies into sharp relief. Often, it may suggest that there are no discernible impacts or (worse) the "wrong" ones. A careful investigation of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in the early 1970s, for instance, revealed that even with active public involvement in the CAAs the effect of citizens upon the implementation of the Community Action Program in their areas were "few in number and in most instances limited in scope" (Austin, 1972). More recently, a million dollar study of citizen activism in the public school systems, commissioned by the National Institute of Education, concluded after examining schools in Boston, Atlanta and Los Angeles that citizen groups had become "captives to the school professionals." The conclusion was funereal: "Advocates of citizen participation have more to despair now than they did ten years ago" (Citizen Participation, 1979). In the absence of disciplined evaluation one can, at least, be comfortably ignorant of such disconcerting situations.

2. Critics of an evaluation may be especially zealous for discrediting the methodology. All methodologies are vulnerable to some valid criticism. Agencies may feel badly served by evaluators, or may prefer to avoid the risk of such criticism, unless the methodology is carefully designed with explicit recognition of liabilities. Peter Rossi offers a warning for any evaluator: "Methodological unsophisticates suddenly become experts in sampling, questionnaire construction, experimental design, and statistical analysis, or borrow experts for the occasion. Further replication is called for. But most often it is discovered that the goals of the program in terms of which it was evaluated are not the 'real' goals after all" (Rossi, 1972).

3. Defining policy goals for citizen involvement will likely exacerbate a deep, often unspoken, cleavage of expectations between agency personnel and activists in the participation process. Agencies often hope that participation activities (no matter what the formal objectives are supposed to be) will serve the agency's need. In particular, agency personnel often want participation to facilitate support for the program, to build a constituency, to inform the public about agency programs, to smooth program implementation--in short, to help the agency achieve its image of its own mission. But citizen activists frequently expect the participation arrange-

ments to reduce the power of planners and the bureaucracy, or to force agency deference to citizen opinions--that is, they perceive participation as power sharing. Here is a collision of expectations ripe with potential for disrupting agency-clientele relations and affecting agency morale. It is a conflict the more likely to surface if participation impacts must be carefully articulated and evaluated (W. A. Rosenbaum, 1976; Mazmanian and Nienaber, 1979).

These implicit risks to evaluation suggest that creating an appropriate environment for the design of evaluation is as important as the proper conduct of the evaluation itself. Such an environment, at the very least, should be conducive to the recognition of these, or other risks an agency perceives in the evaluation. It is often possible to design an evaluation in a manner that anticipates, and perhaps avoids, some of these risks.

II. CLARIFYING GOALS: A SIMPLE POLICY MODEL

Competent evaluations of public policy, no matter what the substantive area, tend to follow a similar design. David Nachmias has suggested a useful enumeration of the major steps (Nachmias, 1979).

A. Goal Definition: An identification of the major objective(s) a program attempts to accomplish. These goals may be prescribed by law, regulation or program guidelines. They might be provided by agency personnel or clientele. They might be formal or informal, the publicly declared or implicitly accepted ones. It is essential, however, that some notion of goals be formulated.

B. Impact Model: This can be a simple, or sophisticated, statement of what activities are expected to produce which results. It is an effort to provide a conceptualization of cause-effect linkages between program activities and the consequences of such activity.

C. Research Design: A good design identifies where program activities will be examined, which ones will be examined, how measurements will be obtained, the standards used to decide the scope of the investigation, and standards of validity for data.

D. Measurement/Data Collection: Many activities might be included here. These can range from relatively uncomplicated analysis of existing data to conducting field work or creating a new data base.

E. Analysis and Interpretation: The final evaluation of material is often straightforward and undemanding if goal definition and impact models have been carefully utilized in the formulation of the research design.

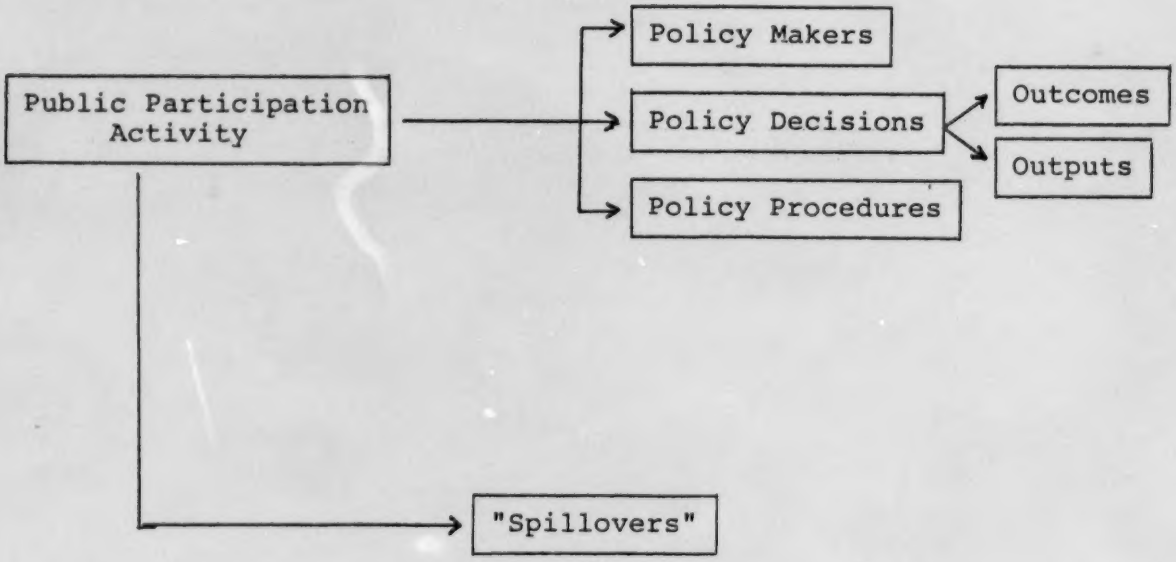

FIGURE I

BASIC COMPONENTS OF POLICY IMPACT
FROM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Defining the "goals" often seems the most formidable single problem in evaluating the policy impacts of citizen participation. A simple model can be serviceable in resolving this issue and, simultaneously, offering useful concepts for impact description.

A Policy Process Model

The policy goals for public participation are often elusive because the meaning of "policy" itself is obscure. Is agency 'policy' what emerges in regulations, guidelines or other formal program documents? Is it the procedures used by agency personnel in making decisions? Does it involve the attitudes of decision makers? The concept of "policy" can be divided into several major elements which, in some manner, are usually included when "policy impacts" are discussed in evaluation literature (Cook and Scioli, 1975; Greenberger, Crenson and Scissey, 1976). Figure I suggests a rudimentary impact model that links public involvement to several facets of an agency's activities which are usually involved in most policy evaluations. Figure I suggests that one can generally define the policy goals for citizen participation into three broad categories: those relating to policy makers, substantive policy decisions themselves, and the procedures for making policy. Further, there may also be "spillovers." Several indicators for these various categories will shortly be suggested. It will be helpful, however, to suggest what the categories imply:

A. "Policy Makers"--Participation activities are intended, explicitly or implicitly, to influence a specific set of individuals within an agency. Usually, these are individuals with some responsibility for resolving an issue about which citizens have been active. These agency personnel might be affected in a variety of ways. They might note citizen viewpoints, consider citizen viewpoints, seek out citizen involvement in a decision, create more opportunities for public participation and much else.

B. "Policy Decisions"--Agencies make formal and informal determinations which are often understood as a "decision" on a matter. Public participation might have an impact upon policy decisions in at least two ways:

affecting outputs: citizen activities may influence the substantive content of a decision, or its timing, or the array of individuals involved in its formation.

affecting outcomes: all policy decisions have consequences, or "outcomes," both intended and unintended. These "outcomes" may well be influenced by participation activity. Thus, citizen involvement in making an agency decision may facilitate implementation or, conversely, may impede implementation of a policy.

C. "Policy Procedures"--Policy formation is more than individuals making decisions. It is the procedure by which the decisions are made. Public participation activities can conceivably change the procedures by which an agency makes decisions. A new set of individuals, or units, may be brought into the decisional structure or others excluded. Or decisions may follow different time constraints as a result of citizen activism.

D. "Spillovers"--The impacts of citizen participation reach beyond an agency sponsoring it. The behavior of other agencies, Congressional committees, interest groups and others might be affected by the citizen involvement. These "spillovers" are frequently unanticipated and may be unmeasured because they are not sought in evaluation designs. However, these external impacts from citizen activity may be as substantial to an agency as the internally recognized ones.

It is possible--indeed, very likely--that citizen activities will have impacts on several of these policy dimensions simultaneously. Moreover, evaluators may choose deliberately to confine study to only one, or a few, of these potential dimensions. One useful aspect of the model, however, is that it suggests a very generous range of different policy domains where evaluators may look in defining "goals" for public participation. Several considerations are significant when specifying these goals more precisely.

Defining Goals: A Few Admonitions

It is one matter to decide what within an agency can be generally examined as "policy" and another matter to formulate specific set of goals for such evaluation. Many problems disappear if a few issues are resolved at the beginning.

First, officially defined goals are often unsatisfactory, or at least incomplete, as a basis for evaluation. "Among the many reasons for the negative pall of evaluation results," notes Carol Weiss, "is that studies have accepted bloated promises and political rhetoric as authentic program goals" (Weiss, 1979). One way to avoid this "goal trap" is to specify several alternative sets of goals to be evaluated. The U. S. Forest Service, for instance, has used for many years a procedure called 'Codinvolve' to solicit, describe and present to program managers the opinion of citizens concerning how public domain in the agency's jurisdiction should be utilized. Policy makers are asked what categories of citizen information they prefer (but not what opinions they prefer!) before public reactions are obtained. Citizen opinion is then described in a manner responsive to the decision makers' needs. When the procedure is evaluated, one criterion is the extent to which the available citizen information fits these specific goals for citizen information. Clearly, the "goals" for these opinion summaries may vary from one decision-making context to another, according to how specific Forest Service officials define their information needs.

Second, most participation programs operate with multiple goals, no matter what the official versions. "Much of what we consider to be 'reality,'" notes Irwin Deutscher, "is the consequence of negotiations among interested parties. Different parties to a program (staff, clientele, funders, administrators, evaluators) may entertain very different conceptions of the reality of the program goals (Deutscher, 1977). It is often essential that evaluators consult with several of these varied interests when arriving at some formulation of goals for the program evaluation.

Finally, it is quite possible that different participation activities will have different goals. One recent study of public participation in water resource planning began by assuming that any particular participation activity might have one of three general purposes: education/information, review/reaction, or interaction/dialogue. The investigator then matched several different activities, such as public hearings and citizen workshops, to different goals and evaluated each activity accordingly. Judy Rosener has suggested that useful evaluations must begin with a clear conception of what activities are related to which goals according to whose viewpoint (Rosener, 1978). Lacking this information, it may be difficult to appreciate why one or more parties to the participation activity becomes disenchanted with the study or some of its findings.

Let us assume that these snares for the unwary have been somehow eluded. The practical work is to convert these generalizations about participation activities and policy impacts into a specific impact model. Some suggestions follow.

III. FORMULATING AN IMPACT MODEL: THE USE OF INDICATORS

An impact model translates the concepts of Figure I into a set of indicators specific to an agency: it is those particular participation activities, impacts and linkages to be examined. The driving logic of an impact model should be: What difference does public involvement make in policy formulation? This is not the same issue as another often confused with it: Has the agency created an effective citizen participation program? Evaluations of participation based upon the latter question usually turn out to be largely descriptions of the frequency and variety of activities themselves. It is quite possible, however, for a participation program to be "effective" in a manner irrelevant to policy impacts. The importance of distinguishing between an evaluation of the participation process and its effect is suggested in a recent study of public involvement programs of the Corps of Engineers. After examining the Corp's involvement program in five District Offices, Jeanne Neinaber and Daniel Mazmanian concluded that the process itself had been moderately successful--a great many citizens were actively involved in planning several Corps projects--but the impacts were disappointing to the Corps because substantial citizen consensus did not materialize for the eventual project designs (Mazmanian and Nienaber, 1979).

A great variety of specific activities, events, behaviors or other factors can be introduced into Figure 1 as indicators for an impact model relevant to a specific agency. In Table I are a few general indicators suggested by recent policy impact evaluations. It should be possible for evaluators, working with agency personnel, to suggest many others.

It is often useful for the evaluator, consulting perhaps with agency personnel, to develop a "shopping list" of potential indicators for an impact model prior to selecting a specific set. Several matters ought to be considered, in any case, when selecting indicators. First, should attention be given to possible unintended, or undesirable, impacts? This may be a prickly issue. Agencies are understandably reluctant to collaborate in producing evidence suggesting their incompetence or inadequacy. But an evaluator does not want to wear a set of agency-approved blinders. Since the issue often emerges at the end of evaluation, it is best faced at the outset. Second, should multiple indicators be used for an activity? An agency may expect its citizen advisory committees to offer information, but the committee members (or their constituency) may expect to influence agency policy. Often, the solution is to adopt several indicators for a single activity. While these issues do not always seem formidable at a study's initiation, their neglect is often the provocation for later disputes between sponsors and evaluators over the "usefulness" or "reliability" of the study.

IV. MEASUREMENT: THE 'HARD' AND 'SOFT' OPTIONS

All evaluation studies are haunted, to some extent, by the spectre of 'internal validity.' Technically, internal validity refers to "the degree to which a research design allows the researcher to rule out alternative explanations for the way a particular policy is casually related to its target variables" (Franklin and Thrasher, 1976). Less formally, it is a measurement problem which can be roughly summarized: Are we accurately measuring what we think we're measuring? It is customary for exponents of good research evaluation to exhort that internal validity be assured through the use of experimental or quasi-experimental designs that assure random assignment to comparative test groups and provide explicit controls to account for other potential influences on policy impacts beside those being evaluated. It is unrealistic, however, to expect experimental designs to be frequently utilized in evaluating public participation programs--time and cost are usually prohibitive and, in any case, agencies want results too rapidly for experimental approaches. But it is possible to use measurements in an evaluation that more or less approach internal validity. Some measurements are too weak to bear the weight of reasonable generalization. Other measures offer plausible and valid evidence.

A Range of Options

It is useful to think of available measures for policy impact evaluation as lying along a continuum from 'soft' (very suspect of

TABLE I

SOME INDICATORS OF THE MAJOR COMPONENTS IN AN IMPACT MODEL FOR THE POLICY EFFECTS FROM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

I. Public Participation Activity

Citizen advisory board(s)
Informal contacts
Public meetings
Citizen task forces
Public hearings
Speeches and other presentations
Media presentations
Workshops
Education Programs

II. Policy Makers

Awareness of public inputs
Consideration of public inputs
Acceptance of public inputs
Consultation with public
Attitude(s) toward public involvement
Acceptance of future public involvement

III. Policy Decisions

a. Outputs:

New policy elements specifically requested by citizens
Changed distribution of allocations after citizen involvement
Modification of existing policy resulting from citizen involvement
Changes in agency budget

b. Outcomes

More/less litigation
More/less cost of implementation
Greater/lesser constituency satisfaction with program
Greater/lesser intra-agency case with program formulation in future

TABLE I

(continued)

IV. Policy Procedure

Including new groups in policy planning
Including new agencies in policy planning
Changing the internal routine for decisions
Introducing more citizen participation in planning
Changing nature of information used in policy planning

V. Spillovers

Attitude and behavior of other agencies
Attitude and behavior of Congressional committee and/or staff
White House response
Public response to agency

of internal validity) to 'hard' (having some qualities desirable in valid measurement). Each evaluation will involve some unique measurement opportunities and constraints, but the materials in Table II suggest the utility of very broad categories of measurement into which more specific items can be placed.

Table II offers an array of options among which evaluators may choose in constructing a research design. Evaluations will typically involve a mix of 'hard' and 'soft' options according to time, budget and personnel available. The better evaluation studies borrow from techniques that are predominantly rigorous. An example is David Austin's study of citizen involvement in the Community Action Agencies (CAAs) created by the Community Action Program. Austin was interested in the extent of citizen influence on policy decisions made by Community Action Agencies during 1967 to 1968. The research design included several elements leaning toward the 'hard' side of Table II:

> Twenty CAAs were selected for study from a total of several hundred. These 20 were selected randomly after stratification by region and size of cities (50,000 to 800,000) to assure the desired mix of environments.
>
> Structured interviews were conducted with CAA board members, CAA staffs (including non-professionals), presidents of the CAA target area associations and administrators of delegated programs.
>
> The study was designed and administered by the Florence Heller School of Advanced Studies in Social Welfare at Brandeis University.

The randomized selection of a rather large number of CAAs permitted a relatively generous base for generalization and also for comparison between different CAA experiences. Interviews with a broad range of participants also permitted comparison of program impacts among different participants--a use of multiple impact measures that can greatly enrich the type of information available for manipulation by evaluators. At the same time, the study was relatively 'soft' because it was a 'one shot' affair without repetition over time.

Since many of the measurement strategies discussed in Table II are stated rather generally, a detailed discussion of the more important, together with some illustrations, will be helpful.

How Often to Measure?

Most policy impact studies associated with citizen involvement programs suffer from a very constricted data base. Weakest is the single case study--the analysis of a single participation event and its outcome--because it ordinarily leaves the evaluator ignorant of how typical is the behavior he identifies. Several case studies maybe

TABLE II

SOME 'SOFT' AND 'HARD' MEASURES OF POLICY IMPACT
FROM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY

	Soft	Intermediate	Hard
Administration of Study	Agency personnel		Outside evaluators
		Planned after event(s)	Planned before event(s)
Frequency of Study	'One shot:' no repeated measure over time	Several measurements over time	Continuing measurement over time
	Case Study: analysis of single event out of many	Several Case Studies	Multiple Case Studies or complete inventory of all events
Quality of Indicators	Measurements made only after event(s)	Measurements made before and after event(s)	Controlled experiment
	No explicit policy impact indicators	Single impact indicator	Multiple impact indicators
	Only participation studied as causal agent	Several causal agents beside participation studied	Many causal agents beside participation studied
	Measures only by participant/observer		Measures made by independent observer
	Only available information utilized		Information created for indicators when necessary
	No empirical data	Frequency counts	Statistical procedures
	Interviewer/observer reports (for attitudinal data)	Structured questionnaire	Survey research methodology

an improvement but more desirable is to examine a large number of case studies (preferably selected with statistical controls) or to assemble all the instances of the program's operation. A 'one shot' evaluation, in contrast, includes all, or virtually all, the case studies available at one time but does not repeat the measurement with the same group at a later date. An example of a useful 'one shot' study is William Gormley's evaluation of the impact of citizen intervenors upon the rate policies of state public utility commissions. Gormley obtained data from all 181 state utility commissions on a wide range of citizen and commission behavior for the period 1974-78 (Gormley, 1979). While the study was not subsequently repeated, it was possible for Gormley to generalize confidently about the commissions during the period embraced by the study.

Time series measurements are rarely conducted in policy evaluation. A time series study involves the repeated application of the research instrument over a period sufficiently long to suggest whether one "slice of time" study is typical of a program's long-term operation. The trade-off between the quality of information and the cost of evaluation is obvious in time-series studies. Ordinarily, agencies do not have the resources (or, perhaps, the inclination) to create arrangements for the repeated monitoring of public involvement programs. This is not necessarily difficult. For instance, an agency can create a standard evaluation form to be filled out by participants in its workshops, hearings, or other repeated participation activities. The form can be administered, evaluated and catalogued by an appropriate agency unit and, with time, one continuing indicator of program impact will be available. The idea of any continuing evaluation will appear amusingly naive in some agencies. Nonetheless, the obstacles are not primarily technical.

Measures Before or After?

The most reliable measurement permits an evaluator to compare some dimension of policy before and after the introduction of public participation activity. Despite the ease with which this is often accomplished (sometimes long after a participation program has been initiated), "before/after" studies are rare to the literature of policy impacts from public participation. A modified version of a before/after study was, however, created in a cooperative 1978 survey sponsored by the International City Managers Association and the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. The study was specifically concerned with how public participation might change local governments' requests for federal grants-in-aid or affect local government allocations of federally shared revenues. Local officials were asked the following questions:

> Have grant proposals developed by local government staff been dropped because of citizen participation?
>
> Have new grant proposals been developed as a result of citizen suggestions?

> Has your local government transferred funding for a service or program from its general budget to a grant because of citizen participation?
>
> Has your local government assumed the costs in its general budget for continuing a service or program funded through an expired grant because of citizen participation?
>
> Has your local government dropped a service or program funded through a grant when the grant expired because of citizen participation?
>
> Has citizen participation had a measurable effect on the setting of priorities within your local government's general budget? (ACIR, 1978)

In effect, the evaluators had created six indicators of policy impact from participation using an implied before/after comparison. A rigorous evaluation, however, would not have relied upon a survey of local officials alone but, instead, would create an independent measurement of these several indicators (perhaps using a randomized sample of local governmental units to conserve costs).

Before/after measures are considerably more rigorous than the "after only" measures common to policy impact evaluations. One major problem with an "after only" measure is the frequent difficulty in knowing with confidence that citizen activities are responsible for variations in policy observed after the activity and attributed to it. But "after only" studies have, unfortunately, the virtue of requiring an agency to exercise no foresight in its participation evaluations. One methodological crutch sometimes applied to give an "after only" study some greater credibility is to compare a case, or cases, of policy making after public participation has been introduced with an apparently similar policy situation lacking the participation element. Policy consequences can then be contrasted to imply that differences may be the result of citizen activism in one case but not the other. For many logical reasons, this type of uncontrolled comparison is unlikely to yield valid measures of public involvement's impact but may suffice for an agency's needs.

The Use of Multiple Impact Indicators

It is almost always desirable, when possible, to use more than a single indicator of policy impacts for a participation program. Consider, for instance, the several different indicators of policy impact for citizen participation used in the CAA study cited earlier (Austin, 1972). The investigator judged the impact according to the following criteria:

> which individuals (citizen participants or others) had <u>a major influence in organizing the CAAs</u>.

the time at which decisions of importance were made compared to the time when participation activities occurred.

which bureaucratic levels made the controlling decisions (were these the ones accessible to the citizen participants?)

the amount of time available for making decisions (were decisions of consequence amenable to debate by the citizen participants?)

Significantly, many of these indicators were not ones that program administrators might have selected but were, in several instances, those important to the participants themselves. Emphasis upon participation in relationship to the timing of decisions within the CAAs was particularly crucial to the underprivileged participants for whom the activities were explicitly targeted. "Most of the decisions that will directly affect the poor," explains Robert Aleshire, "are made either in the first month or the last month of a program process, and there was usually no continuous escalation of decision-making and participation over a period of time" (Aleshire, 1972).

Another way of creating multiple indicators is to compare the evaluation of two different sets of participants in a process using the same measure. A recent examination of the role of advisory committees in the Food and Drug Administration compared the response of committee members to those of the FDA staff, officials of industry and consumer groups on such questions as: To what extent are consumer interests listened to by the advisory committees? Multiple indicators can often be included in participant surveys (Friedman, 1978). One of the most carefully articulated uses of multiple indicators is suggested by Ernest Valfer and his colleagues on the Management Sciences Staff of the U. S. Forest Service (Valver, Laner and Moronne, 1977). Valfer proposes that the impact of public participation on the Service's planning process can be measured by asking program managers to indicate whether public participation in a specific planning activity accomplished any, or all, of the following:

1. generated information about resource management problems;

2. created additional planning objectives;

3. changed the number of planning or decision options;

4. affected the Forest Service position on an issue;

5. affected the Forest Service's decision on an issue;

6. changed the type of resource protected;

7. changed the resource yield;

8. affected the official's confidence in the participation process;

9. affected another party's confidence in the participation process.

Although the use of multiple impact indicators may seem to complicate the investigation and thereby increase its cost, it often takes little more time or manpower than reliance upon a single indicator. Indeed, it may often save agency and evaluator resources in the long run by precluding a second round of evaluation to obtain data which sponsors decide tardily would have been valuable.

Identifying Multiple Causal Factors

A truly rigorous evaluation of participation impacts upon agency policies should preclude the possibility that other significant factors can account for the assumed policy impacts or, at least, should suggest the relative importance of participation among other factors in producing policy impacts. This is rare to impact evaluations. Partially, the lack of controls may result from an evaluator's inability to formulate a satisfactory impact model taking account of several possible independent variables associated with policy change. It may also betray the reluctance of agencies or evaluators to ask indelicate questions leading to a controversial revelation that certain factors, or interests, figured prominently in policy outcomes (particularly if they had "no business" doing so). However, it is possible to compare the relative contribution of citizen involvement among other factors associated with a policy impact through a variety of approaches ranging from simple impressionistic techniques to statistical ones. The usefulness of an evaluation that includes such a comparison of causal factors is almost always improved.

One evaluation using a relatively simple comparison of factors affecting policy output is William Gormley's previously noted study of citizen impact on state public utility commission rate policies. Gormley contrasted citizen influence with that of state officials (an attorney general or people's counsel) and the committee staff in eventual rate decisions. His measure of comparative influence was derived from ratings made by commissioners of the state utility boards and revealed that citizen influence varied according to the character of the rate case before the commissions. The agenda of factors with which citizen activity might be compared to illuminate the relative influence of the public upon an agency's policy will vary among agencies. Some of these other policy influences might include: state and local officials; other federal agencies; other agency units; congressional personnel; White House personnel; professional groups; litigation (actual or threatened); past agency policy; pressures of time; external events (crisis, emergency, elections, etc.). Most often, assessments of the relative contribution

of several factors in shaping policy are provided by participants in the policy process themselves or by presumably knowledgeable outside observers. Such evaluations can be summarized and compared in many different formats and, when done properly, are amenable to statistical expression and utilization in impact models.

Attitudinal Data: From Good to Bad

Many evaluation studies utilize some variety of attitude measure when assessing participation's impact upon agency policies. It is often possible to obtain crucial data only through questionnaires, surveys or other devices that probe the attitudes of key participants in the participation process. Attitude studies, like other social measurements, can range from 'soft' to 'hard.' Few areas of social research have been so extensively studied as interview procedures. The pitfalls of interview research are widely understood and exhaustively described in a voluminous literature (Blackstrom and Marsh, 1963). An evaluator seeking to create a good interview instrument can find dependable assistance from many sources and, consequently, there is little point in reviewing the literature here.

It is worth noting, however, that most impact evaluations using attitude measures are likely to commit predictable errors. First, evaluations of this kind often violate sound rules for any questionnaire, survey, opinion poll or other attitude measure. Specifically (1) questions are often ambiguous or confusing; (2) questions are frequently (if unintentionally) biased; and (3) a congenial, impartial interview situation is not assured. This implies the need for a "pre-test"--a procedure common to professional survey research--where obvious sources of interviewer or questionnaire bias can be identified and removed. Otherwise, interpretative problems thrive when attitudinal data is assembled. Consider, for instance, the ambiguity to the following question addressed to members of five citizen advisory committees associated with the Washington State River Basin Program:

> How often do you think public officials have been influenced by the views of the members of the Citizen Advisory Committee? [Response options: 'Often, occasionally, seldom, never.'] (Pierce and Doerksen, 1976).

One major problem is the ambiguity of the words "public officials" and "influenced." It is quite possible for the respondents to have very different conceptions of the influence situation when they respond, for instance, that "public officials" are "influenced" by the advisory committee "often." Which public officials are to be considered? And what does "influence"imply--information, persuasion, power sharing or something else? Another problem is that the response options do not permit the possibility of a "don't know" answer. It might be extremely helpful to discover whether the advisory committee members are informed about the results of their own activity. It is a counsel of perfection to expect interview materials to be entirely innocent of bias, ambiguity or other error. But pre-

test procedures easily mastered and applied from many expert sources can usually reduce question bias.

The second broad category of error in attitude measures concerns the adequacy of samples when surveys are utilized. Pressed by time or circumstance, agencies or consultants sometimes produce a "seat of the pants" survey which solicits opinions from whatever segment of the desired audience is most readily available. I know of one agency, with a particular program embracing approximately 160 urban areas, that needed quick materials on the success of public involvement activities in these urban activities. Rather than take a calculated sample of the 160 areas ("too much time, too many uncertainties") the program director chose to examine 10 areas where it was known that "reliable information can be gotten." This approach clearly could not yield reliable data characterizing the whole program but, worse, this fact was deftly obscured in the presentation. Any survey purporting to generalize about some population--of individuals, programs, administrative agencies, or whatever--should be based upon a statistically random sample of the population at least. The value of a random sample may be less apparent when it is possible to aggregate practically all the cases about which one wishes to generalize. But statistically valid sampling procedures are often so simple to use technically and conceptually that they ought routinely to be considered in any policy impact evaluation. The procedure is also one of the cheapest ways to purchase credibility for a survey document.

This brief survey can only suggest the range of issues and options open to evaluators of public participation's policy impact. Before discussing briefly some strategies for increasing the utilization of policy impact evaluations, two special issues in evaluation merit some attention.

V. TWO SPECIAL ISSUES: DIFFUSE AND DISGUISED INFLUENCE

Some of the actual influence exerted upon agencies by citizen involvement activities is often obscured by the manner in which the influence situations are normally conceived by evaluators. It is understandable that evaluations should concentrate upon specific issues, or decisions as the focus for evaluation. The common strategy in many evaluations is to seek issues, or decisions, where public involvement "did" or "did not" matter. However, the influence of participation procedures may be significantly underestimated if two other influence situations are ignored.

It is often possible to identify a diffuse influence exerted by involvement procedures upon agency decision makers quite apart from any specific issue. Writing about the impact of public interest groups on administrative behavior, Peter Schuck recently observed that little of this influence was exercised at the <u>formal</u> level, yet

> many agency officials report that the mere existence of public interest groups, the knowledge that officials 'are being watched' affects their behavior quite apart from any particular action such groups may take. (Schuck, 1977)

This type of influence--which Schuck calls "atmospheric"--is often betrayed by public officials in their knowledge that groups could use various involvement activities, if they chose, to make their influence felt. In short, the availability of a public involvement procedure is often sufficient to bestow some influence upon groups apart from any particular instance of a group's actual use of a participation arrangement. It would seem important for evaluators to consider the extent to which administrative agencies may anticipate the use of a participation mechanism and alter their policies with this prospect in mind.

The impact of public participation may also register in agencies through programs, decisions, or other policies not formally proposed or created. A decision to abort a policy may never surface as an "issue" attracting the attention of an evaluator seeking to measure the impact of participation on an agency. Yet decisions to abandon a prospective program or to avoid formal resolution of certain matters because of the consequences from public involvement activities are important indicators of citizen impact upon agency policy. It is often relatively easy to include in evaluation studies some strategy for identifying these otherwise concealed influences.

Another instance of disguised influence is suggested by an experience of the U. S. Forest Service in the early 1970s (Clark, Hendee and Stankey, 1976). The Service, responsible for deciding how to classify approximately 60 miles of the Salmon River (Idaho), was considering several options, including a recommendation for the land's inclusion among lands protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Seeking a public response, the Service proposed four alternative classification plans and six variations on them for public review. Using its "Codinvolve" procedures, the Service eventually identified, described and summarized for the responsible program managers more than 6800 citizen reactions to these alternatives. The eventual recommendation made to Congress by the Service was one of the alternatives not favored by a majority. Would it be appropriate, under these circumstances, to assert that the public had exercised no significant influence upon the Service's eventual decision? The answer is not simple. Some aspect of the public response--though not the majority viewpoint--apparently did affect the Service's thinking. Moreover, the majority may have influenced the decision without controlling it. This episode should suggest the importance of including, within the ambit of potential impacts from public participation, those agency decisions where public influence may be felt even when the agency acts contrary to apparent majority opinions.

VI. INCREASING THE USE OF EVALUATIONS

The material in this paper ought to suggest that procedures are available, or readily adaptable, to agencies interested in evaluating the policy consequences of their citizen involvement programs. The attractiveness of such a procedure can be greatly improved, I think, if some guidelines are observed in the process of designing these evaluations.

1. Whenever possible, a variety of indicators for measuring the impact of participation should be preferred to a few indicators. The value of multiple indicators lies in the breadth of information they provide and, consequently, the greater range of potential concerns an evaluation can address. This implies, at the very least, that an agency's own goals from an evaluation study should not prematurely preclude any consideration of alternative objectives of greater interest to private groups, outside agencies or other parties. Using a variety of impact indicators also decreases the vulnerability of a study to criticism that it is too "narrow" or "irrelevant" to the concern of other important actors in the participation process. At the very least, the designers of an evaluation should consider and debate a broad range of indicators before selecting a specific set.

2. Definitions of evaluation goals, indicators, models and other design features should be a collaborative venture between agency personnel and outside evaluators. This implies, of course, that nonagency evaluators are to be used. This is not a covert strategy to create income security for consultants but a recognition that the credibility of "in-house" evaluations is usually much lower than those produced by consultants. The value of close collaboration between agency and evaluator at the research design phase lies in controlling the tendency for an evaluator to create an arbitrary, unrealistic or narrow definition of research goals and models. It is particularly important in these consultations that agency people be candid in suggesting alternative, or informal, definitions of goals, methods and models beside those sanctified as "official" or "acceptable." In this perspective, there is no sovereign set of goals, models or measures appropriate for all evaluation studies but, rather, a set of available materials to be modified and applied to a specific evaluation task according to the judgment of those using the study.

3. Use the most rigorous techniques available for a given amount of available time, money and manpower. The more rigorous techniques do not necessarily impose a severe escalation in resource requirements when compared to less rigorous ones. A random sample of units in a survey, for instance, can be drawn with a wide range of sample sizes, depending upon the margins of error the evaluator is willing to tolerate. Many random samples cost no more to define and assemble than a non-random, non-systematic survey of units for an evaluation study. Similarly, the use of time series data to measure the policy impacts of citizen participation may not be difficult because much of the requisite data is sometimes easily available. The more rigorous approaches often do require more

thought and time in their design. The time and thought involved is often moderate. But evaluators cannot do a competent job if they are expected to be short-order cooks who can concoct a speedy research design, produce a quickie data review and wrap the product in a convincing analysis upon request. The lead-time for a competent evaluation project ought, therefore, to be relatively generous. Another way to encourage rigor in research design is for evaluators to create, when possible, several alternative designs involving differing levels of measurement and resource investment. In effect, this is an effort to make explicit the trade-offs between costs and benefits in alternative research strategies. Quite often, the gains in information quality will be sufficiently obvious from the more rigorous approaches--especially when comparative costs between better and worse approaches are not significantly different--to make the better techniques their own best advertisement.

None of these three admonitions, nor any others coming to mind, will assure any evaluator freedom from criticism nor spare an evaluation from controversy. Indeed, the more carefully the evaluator does his work, the more likely he will be to clarify issues and impacts of citizen involvement in a manner provoking debate and argument. Citizen participation is inherently a contentious public issue and wrangling among partisans on the issue's many sides will not be stilled by any single study or group of studies. Nonetheless, good studies contribute to clarifying issues, to improving judgments about impacts or alternatives and to diminishing the credibility of blatant exaggeration and misformation. No one setting sail on such a sea should do so unwarned. There are, however, better or worse ways to navigate. This has been a plan for good sailing, not calm seas.

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PART C--UTILIZING EVALUATION STUDIES

Chapter 7

FEDERAL MANAGERS AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

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The Carter Administration is placing increased emphasis upon public participation in federal agency decision-making, with the primary purpose of improving government responsiveness to public needs (E012160, 1979). To improve the quality and substance of agency responsiveness, managers must evaluate current participation policies and programs. Many managers, however, are uncertain about how to evaluate participation activities.

It is essential that managers understand what to evaluate in a public participation program and why. Let me suggest that the six fundamental elements which should be evaluated are: 1) the adequacy of the public participation plan; 2) the causes of participation and non-participation; 3) the clarity and comprehensibility of information provided to the public; 4) involving the public; 5) collecting public input; and 6) evaluating public input. Focusing evaluation efforts on these elements can build and sustain constructive public participation in agency decision-making processes.

There are, of course, other important facets of public participation, but experience in the seventies, in particular with natural resource-related agency programs, substantiates that these six elements are especially significant to evaluation and fundamental to long-range and constructive public participation programs.

I. WAS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLANNED EFFECTIVELY?

All too often, agencies carry out public participation planning only superficially. Planning is not a static idea but the continual building of a dynamic process (Rosener, 1979). The importance of such planning is widely recognized, but the action taken is often only a sketchy "who does what and when."

Planning for participation is the painstaking job of developing a strategy tailored to meet the needs of relevant agency units and the publics interested in and affected by potential decision outcome. The draft plan should be reviewed by the public, modified if necessary, and updated thereafter as circumstances warrant. Some critical elements that should be considered in the participation plan are indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Elements of Public Participation Plan

1) Objectives of the participation program (particularly reaons for communicating with the public)

2) Steps of the decision-making process vital to involvement of publics interested or affected (e.g., formulation of the alternatives, review of the draft)

3) Role of the public at specific steps in the decision-making process (identifying issues, collecting inventory data)

4) Informative materials for public use at each step in the process (fact sheets, summaries, process steps)

5) Ways public can easily contact responsible agency officials to get or give information on the agency action (name and phone number)

6) Who the interested and affected publics are (key citizens, minority groups)

7) Means to inform publics at vital steps of the process (direct mail, mass media)

8) Means to involve and collect information from the public at steps of the process (response forms, meetings)

9) Ways publics can obtain assistance to constructively and equitably participate relative to other affected interests (bilingual assistance, reimbursement program)

10) Mechanisms to inform and coordinate with other units and levels of government and appropriate elected officials (meetings and memoranda of understanding, such as those being developed by USDA and USDI)

11) Methods and time to document, summarize, and organize public argumentation and evidence (content analysis, codinvolve, comparative analysis)

12) Methods and processes for decisionmakers to consider and use public argumentation and evidence (evaluation processes and systems)

13) Mechanisms for timely and substantial reply to respondents on significant public input issues (individual letter, report)

14) Provision for continuous update of the participation planning, agency unit responsibilities and personnel assignments; training program for agency personnel (when action nationwide and hundreds of sites and personnel involved directly and duration of participation effort is more than one year); requisite resources; approximate costs (public participation unit of agency)

15) Methods to monitor and assess performance against participation plan (evaluation criteria and measure, external evaluator)

The relationship of the elements to one another cannot be stressed too strongly. Clark and Stankey (1975) identify distinct components in the participation program and stress that "...they are highly interdependent. The way in which one is conducted can dramatically affect the others." Hendee (1973) recommends that a "comprehensive plan is required for major public involvement efforts."

Planning of a public participation program is analogous to the planning of a new house. Without a blueprint for the house, materials are dumped at the building site, but there is no strategy or design for showing how the parts fit together to function effectively. Carpenters and electricians can assemble their parts, but each may have different ideas of the kind of house desired. The house will be built inefficiently and function poorly for the inhabitants (Holsti, 1969). A public participation program consists of many elements that are interdependent on each other, and the arranging of those parts requires flexibility to meet the changing needs of the participation program as it unfolds.

In sum, agency managers should evaluate the adequacy of their planning strategy for public participation to be sure that it takes into account the interdependence of program elements.

II. WHO PARTICIPATES?

Why don't more people participate in decision-making on issues which affect them? This is a fundamental issue which must be confronted by all program managers. The reasons for non-participation by publics affected by a potential decision can be legion. "At Square One" (ICCP, 1977) identifies possibilities such as: 1) people fail to receive the information; 2) potential participants encounter barriers that inhibit time and resource; 3) affected groups and individuals don't know how to become involved; and 4) other priorities do not allow time for involvement with the agency.

Overwhelming evidence in a recent study by Harris and Associates (1979) shows that socioeconomic status and race significantly affect participation in federal executive agency decision-making processes, and that 70 percent of the public understand only a little or hardly understand at all how to go about trying to influence a decision being considered by the executive branch of the government.

Participation of the "general public," as evaluated by a recent Forest Service study (Driessen, 1979), increases with membership in an interest group, and the methodology for involvement can significantly favor participation of urbanites over rural people. The study also noted that almost all agency personnel involved in an intense two-year nationwide public participation

program (over three hundred thousand people directly involved at public sessions or providing written input) emphasized the need for "more systematic effort to involve all the publics, especially the nonaligned individuals and groups."

Often the cause for nonparticipation can be traced to the fact that potential participants were not identified initially or at some later step in the decision-making process. Agencies should have a systematic procedure (not merely a mailing list) for identifying interested and affected publics, and their needs, in order that they can be notified to participate at crucial points in the decision-making process.

The other side of the coin is understanding why some people participate actively. One study (Twight, 1977) found that people who seldom participate in the political process were disproportionally represented in public participation processes used by the agency. The participation strategy unintentionally provided an opportunity for low-status, alienated persons with local interests to express resentment against the professional autonomy of agency personnel and against "outsiders."

In another case, three different studies used the same methodology on the East and West coasts and in Colorado. It was shown conclusively that publics participating in Forest Service processes and having membership in a conservation group (and associated variables) had stereotyped misconceptions of the agency's actual positions more than a year after the public involvement process had been completed (Twight and Paterson, 1979). The reason for this stereotyping was the agency's failure to communicate well with some of its constituencies. The lack of communication caused mistrust and utilization of an advocacy strategy by constituency groups to influence agency decisions.

Agencies are naturally hurt when few participate in their programs, and happy when many do. But evaluation of participating and nonparticipating publics is concerned less with numbers than with understanding why some participate and some do not. Only through such knowledge can agencies hope to shape programs that stimulate more active participation by all affected interests.

III. WAS INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE AND COMPREHENSIBLE?

One reason why publics often manifest more discontent with an agency than they actually feel is the failure of the agency to communicate its position to the various participants (Twight and Paterson, 1979). For example, in an analysis of a Forest Service public involvement process (Hager and Valfer, 1979), the availability of necessary information was rated 59 percent favorable by the public and 22 percent unfavorable. However, on the question of information comprehensibility, 6 percent were favorable and 64 percent unfavorable. Examples concerning information

problems between the public and government abound. Everyone knows it is a problem and everyone is trying to do something about it, and evaluation should continue until the problems are resolved.

One particular area where information and its display is extremely important to the lay public is the draft environmental impact statement. The public is often asked to review and comment on the alternatives and the consequences in such documents.

If agencies are aware of the consequences of the alternatives, then the public should also be informed clearly how the consequences affect them. If alternatives and consequences are not well displayed, affected publics cannot fully understand what the agency is doing, and the agency is not receiving the quality of thought it should. The proposal should contain clear narrative and data in a format that allows the public to understand fully the alternatives and their consequences if implemented.

Proposed alternatives facilitate comprehension of basic problems and are ways to analyze and evaluate acceptable solutions. The range of alternatives presented may not always be within traditional agency decision boundaries, but the purpose of open review is to determine if the public believes the recommended alternative is the best course of action for the agency to take.

Comparison of alternatives and consequences assists a great many publics, expert or not, which might otherwise lack time and resources to develop other alternatives. It stands to reason that if the agency thoughtfully develops and analyzes all feasible alternatives and proposes what it believes best, full exposure of agency work enhances confirmation of necessary changes, which is a basic purpose of involvement.

Finally, many methods exist to inform the public (e.g., print and electronic media) at various steps of the participation process. Harris (1979) shows that Department of Agriculture efforts to reach citizens for their views on specific policies were more successful through mass media sources than word-of-mouth channels. Television (64%) and newspapers (57%) were significantly higher than friends and neighbors (20%) or interest groups and organizations (18%). Despite this evidence, three methods for communication with the public are essential--direct mail, phone calls, and personal face-to-face contacts.

In sum, agency managers must evaluate the purpose and clarity of information provided to the public, including: assessment of comprehension of lay publics of draft document alternatives and consequences and adequacy of mass media methods and personal methods to inform publics.

IV. WERE PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES ADEQUATE?

Nowhere in a public participation program is there greater need for evaluation than with regard to the adequacy of methods for collecting public input. The public should be satisfied that they can effectively participate in the decision-making process. It is not sufficient to espouse the "we are always open" theme. Few people, even well-paid representatives of some interest groups, can afford to stay in constant touch with the agency.

When collecting public input (whatever the method and wherever in the process) the agency must make clear whether it wants factual information about what is, or attitudinal and value information about what should be. Agencies get both kinds of information in participation programs. But agencies often fail to communicate well to the public what is really needed at each significant step in the process. Agencies should communicate what they are going to do with information. Misunderstanding concerning perceived roles often leads to expectations that cannot be fulfilled.

In view of what some agencies are currently spending on traditional methods such as public hearings and meetings, the costs of collecting input by special methods such as surveys seem quite reasonable in selected participation programs. For example, the Soil Conservation Service is using such an approach with its Resources Conservation Act program. The agency is carrying out its traditional participation program in some 3,000 counties to obtain public input and is using Harris and Associates to interview citizens for additional input and generation of valid statistics.

The pros and cons of such surveys, and smaller ones, are well documented. What is not well known is how closely findings from the two different methods, survey and traditional agency participation programs, match. Some research (Bultena and Rogers, 1974) shows that publics participating voluntarily in agency processes have very different views than publics responding to survey methods in the same area.

Attention also needs to be focused on the development and use of something similar to the survey--the structured response form. The form accompanies the draft document or information from which it was built and seeks comment on. It allows for some open-ended response and has few, if any, demographic types of questions. It is very content oriented.

Such forms can be used by the agency at significant steps in the participation process to obtain comment during public sessions. But caution is advised here--use of forms is viable only with interested and affected publics who want to participate with the agency in the formulation of the decision. They cannot be mailed out at random to the public. But if the structured

response forms are part of the participation program, and the publics want to be involved, they can be used effectively.

In sum, given the wide variety of techniques that may be used to collect public input, it is important that the agency manager conduct timely evaluations of the appropriateness of the methods currently in use. Only through such evaluation can the participatory process be "fine tuned" to provide the most effective opportunities.

V. WAS PUBLIC INPUT UTILIZED?

The utilization of citizen input is, without question, the most critical, complex, and least understood component of public participation. It is also an area where agencies and the courts (California v. Bergland, 1980) are focusing considerable attention.

A number of federal agencies are currently attempting to improve their use of public input. The Bureau of Land Management, based on a study of its participation activities (Buck, 1979), is rebuilding its public participation program with particular focus on procedures and training related to utilization of public input. The Forest Service is currently completing a thorough review of its RARE II public participation program with particular emphasis on the examination of the strategies and processes for analyzing over 260,000 documents provided by the public. The Forest Service is also sponsoring a two-year study of public participation in its recent 1980 Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act Program. The study is concerned with communication consensus achieved through public participation and on tracing public inputs through each decision level in the agency, assessing responsiveness at each level of perceived public needs. The Soil Conservation Service is planning to carry out a study focusing on the comparative value and use of public input obtained by the Harris (1979) survey research and the agency participation program (initial effort involved 164,000 people attending 9,000 local public sessions in 1978). The results of these efforts should be instructive.

Agencies face a number of crucial issues in utilizing citizen input: Does tabulation of citizen opinion into poll-like categories imply agency deference to majority opinion? Should the numerical display itself tip decisions? What additional legal burdens does an agency acquire when the number of opinions or signatures can decide the decision outcome? Does display of such data lead to superficial conclusions or mislead the public? When an agency numerically counts pros and cons on various aspects of a proposal, citizens understandably infer that opinion statistics will influence decisions. If agency managers don't use such statistics or maintain they're merely informative, there arises a legal question of why they don't influence decisions.

An agency should clearly inform the public of its policy, if not its procedure, for evaluating and using public input. This has been borne out in a 1980 legal decision (California v. Bergland) where the court ruled that the agency is responsible for following its guidelines in the evaluation and use of public input.

The policy of tabulation of public input gathered from non-survey methods leads to two critical requirements, one for the agency and one for the public. The agency must make very aggressive efforts to inform the affected publics that the number of opinions and reasons offered to the agency is very important, just as in a referendum or an election (Ostheimer, 1977). The public must also be informed in advance that while the agency cannot use public input statistics for evaluation to reach valid conclusions, and the agency must consider other criteria in the decision-making process, the pro and con opinion statistics calculated by the agency can significantly influence the decision outcome.

From the public point of view, organizations and citizens who have a stake in decision outcomes must do all that is possible to marshall as many attendees, letters, postcards, petitions, etc., favoring their viewpoint to swell the agency tabulations. Even though a particular public constituency has forcefully and cogently expressed its opinion and reasoning on the proposal and former proposals of a similar nature, it must do all that it can to build up its constituency to turn out the "vote" (Fairfax, 1974). The edge of victory for interest groups may hinge on a good showing in the tally columns.

Sometimes agencies argue that massive amounts of public input require less than desirable methods of analysis to do the job swiftly and not cause delay of decisions. However, Harris (1979) shows that the public, by four to one, favors putting up with some delay in big decisions rather than getting things done quickly at the expense of not utilizing public input.

In sum, agency managers should review their strategy and procedure on utilization of public input and should evaluate public understanding of how input is to be used.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has outlined a practical plan for evaluation from the viewpoint of an agency manager. That viewpoint is aimed at increasing program effectiveness and efficiency under conditions of limited resources. The manager needs to know if the agency's strategy is basically sound and how it might be improved to implement more effective programs.

It is recognized that this conception of evaluation is not

exhaustive or exclusive. Citizens might have a very different perspective on evaluation criteria. Similarly, social scientists might have very different views. However, the management perspective is vital in any overall approach to evaluating public participation.

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Chapter 8

EVALUATING COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMS

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Even more than most activities associated with community service programs, citizen participation is characterized by a large body of opinion--pro and con--about what "should be" and relatively little hard information about "what is" (Onibokun and Curry, 1976). The advocates of citizen participation regard it as an extension of democratic values to groups excluded from public decision-making processes. The critics regard it as a threat to representative government. It is no doubt time to examine our experience with citizen participation and to establish a policy and evaluation framework for the future. The need for valid and reliable information about the effects of citizen participation is incontestable. Yet, the total body of evaluative work that has been produced in this area remains exceedingly small, particularly in view of the broad range and scope of citizen participation activities.

Evaluation research cannot address every question that pertains to citizen participation; it can, presumably, help pinpoint the more salient ones. By the same token, evaluation research cannot generate scientifically validated information on the entire spectrum of citizen participation activities. It can, however, generate findings that provide an empirical basis for future policy and administrative decisions.

The purpose of this paper is to consider the elements necessary for useful evaluation of citizen participation in federally-assisted community services programs. While many would argue that citizen participation has long been a fact of American political life, the movement has taken a few new turns in recent decades. In order to generate a relevant evaluation strategy, it is necessary to understand these recent trends.

I. EVOLUTION OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Over the past 35 years, citizen participation has emerged as a significant force in the formation of public policy. The history of this period can conveniently be summed up in four phases (ACIR, 1980). Phase One, Procedural Reform, is characterized by the passage of the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946. The Act was designed to curtail the diversity and unpredictability of administrative practice and to provide for the views of citizens

by way of public notice and the opportunity to comment on proposed rules. The Freedom of Information Act of 1966 represented another significant reform step.

Phase Two, the Assertion of Rights, reflects concerns incorporated into the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. The EOA in particular underscored the right of low-income residents to participate in the planning, conduct and evaluation of local community action programs. Both statutes mandated not only that federal agencies respond to citizen input, but that they actively help organize, train and support neighborhood and community-based organizations.

Under regulations published by the Office of Economic Opportunity, low-income people were declared eligible for seats on the boards of directors of community action agencies. The 1967 Green Amendment to the EOA reserved at least one-third of these seats for democratically-elected representatives of the poor. OEO further published a "bill of rights" for low-income people; among the rights it explicitly acknowledged were: 1) the right to take part in CAA planning and operational decisions; 2) the right to be fully informed about CAA planning and operations; and 3) the right to expect the CAA to promote their participation in other community-based anti-poverty programs.

Phase Three, Expansion of the Base, witnessed in the early 1970s extension of the concept of citizen participation beyond the poor and minorities to middle and upper income groups and beyond community service programs to a whole host of issues, including environmental protection, consumer protection, governmental reform, health planning, and appropriate technology. Federal social legislation in this phase took the form of block grants, notably in the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 and the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The programs authorized under these acts provided for citizen participation on local planning and advisory bodies, but took pains to emphasize the primary role of local and state elected officials.

CETA manpower programs and Community Development Block Grants require the use of published summaries of plans with the opportunity for citizen review and comment. Public meetings on CDBG plans are typical in most communities. Many programs involve advisory committees and planning boards. These include Area Agencies on Aging, Health Systems Agencies and, as noted, Community Action Agencies.

Phase Four, to the extent it permits characterization, may be labeled System Rationalization. The fact that we are concerned with evaluating citizen participation is evidence of that trend. The work of the Federal Interagency Council on Citizen Participation (ICCP, 1977) and the recent report of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR, 1980) are additional examples. Evaluation is of particular importance in this phase

because it can help to lift discussion out of the realm of rhetoric and anecdotes to a more factual and analytic level.

II. EVALUATION PERSPECTIVES

The methodology of evaluation research is adapted largely from the social and behavioral sciences. It includes various types of research methods such as case studies, quasi-experimental designs, time series analysis, and controlled experimentation. The choice of method is in part dictated by the nature of the program or policy being evaluated, in part by resource constraints, and in part by the demand for feedback by decision-makers (Rosener, 1978).

Citizen participation is such a broadly encompassing phenomenon that no one method is automatically appropriate for evaluating it. An acceptable typology covering all major aspects of citizen participation remains to be constructed and validated. There is little agreement on the criteria that should be considered, still less on the indicators of effectiveness. Even if these problems could be solved, there would remain difficult issues around sampling, performance standards and data collection protocols. Finally, there are difficulties in attributing causality, that is, determining the extent to which citizen participation, as distinct from other community conditions and activities, generated results.

Within these constraints and caveats, evaluations of citizen participation can be undertaken from two broad perspectives. First, we can evaluate participation processes. From this perspective, we might examine the capacity of community groups to organize themselves, to muster the requisite skills and knowledge, and to utilize opportunities for involvement in the public policy arena. We might also assess the extent to which groups speaking for citizens in fact represent the needs and wants of non-participating as well as participating citizens. In addition, we might examine the efficacy of information exchange between citizens and government.

A second perspective is impact oriented. It is concerned with the extent to which citizen participation in fact contributed measurably to content and timing of public decisions, as well as more fundamental changes in public institutions. It can also include more subjective "products" like changes in the attitudes of citizens toward government agencies and their own capacity to influence public decisions.

Where impact is the major issue, citizen participation is the independent variable. Perhaps the simplest way of stating the dichotomy is that citizen participation can be evaluated as a <u>means to an end</u> or an <u>end in itself</u>.

III. THE CSA EXPERIENCE

In the Community Services Administration (CSA) citizen participation is a dominant value in the planning and conduct of community action programs, as well as other national emphasis programs (energy conservation, community food and nutrition, housing and senior opportunities and services). The utilization of evaluations of citizen participation within the Community Services Administration takes place at two levels--grantee and programmatic.

At the grantee level, CSA conducts independent, third-party evaluations of at least 100 community action agencies each year. These evaluations are carried out through the agency's ten regional offices. Each regional office submits to headquarters an annual evaluation plan describing how it will evaluate the community action agencies (and other grantees) in its region. These evaluations may be conducted under various administrative arrangements, i.e., by in-house regional staff, under contract, or through a grant to outside organizations. Whatever the arrangement, it is required that each evaluation team consist minimally of an evaluation expert, a program professional, and a low income representative. The presence of a low income person on the evaluation team is designed to assure a degree of citizen participation in the evaluation process. More substantively, low income persons are often better able to establish communications with CAA clients in the community and to sensitize the evaluation team to particular problems of poverty.

The purpose of these grantee evaluations is to answer the question: What difference is the CAA making in its community with respect to the problem of poverty? There are six general standards of effectiveness by which a CAA is assessed to determine its impact. One of these is the degree to which, both in planning and program administration, the CAA promotes effective citizen participation.

The fact that low income representatives sit on CAA boards in a decision-making capacity makes it possible to assess their role from both process and impact perspectives. From a process standpoint, evaluation teams look at such factors as: 1) whether or not low income representatives were democratically elected from their target areas; 2) how great the voter turnout in these elections was; 3) the extent to which low income representatives are themselves low income persons; 4) whether the board of directors, with particular emphasis on the low income sector, has received training in their duties and responsibilities; 5) what proportion of low income representatives are assigned to standing and "ad hoc" committees of the board.

From an impact perspective, the variables of interest are: 1) the extent of participation by low income representatives in reviewing and approving CAA plans and funding proposals in

committee meetings and at board meetings; 2) the opportunities afforded to a variety of community-based groups to comment on proposed plans; 3) the frequency of meetings between CAP staff and local policy advisory committees or other community groups to discuss issues or ratify proposed plans prior to final action by the board; 4) evidence in board meetings (as reflected in minutes and through interviews) that the views of the community have been considered in reaching final decisions.

Methodologically, these evaluations involve an ex post facto case study approach. Data gathering relies on systematic review of grant documents and other records, supplemented by interviews with key informants in the community using structured and semi-structured questionnaires. Because of limitations of time and resources, more sophisticated (and desirable) methods are precluded. At the same time, individually and collectively, these evaluations provide a reasonably systematic perspective on the state of the art of citizen participation within community action agencies.

Within thirty days of its on-site visit, the evaluation team completes its evaluation report. Utilization then takes place in the following manner.

First, the regional evaluators share the report with the field operations division which is responsible for the grantee. Revisions are made if the field operations division brings to light any additional information. At the same time, field operations personnel become aware of concerns and issues raised by the evaluation team and prepare to take follow-up action. The same procedure is repeated with the grantee itself. The report in draft form is submitted to the grantee, which thereby becomes aware of the assessment; at the same time, the grantee can rebut any particular findings with which it disagrees or can provide supplementary information.

The final report is issued by the regional director with a transmittal letter which highlights particular areas requiring the grantee's attention and which requests a timetable for accomplishing corrective action. At the time when the grantee submits its annual application for refunding, it is expected to have completed most of these actions. If not, special conditions can be attached to its grant which mandate completion of these actions within a specified time frame.

At the programmatic level, the question of citizen participation is also treated as one of several key lines of inquiry in an examination of program effectiveness. Whenever an evaluation of a major national emphasis program is conducted, efforts are made to solicit the views of clients and other members of the target population. Evaluators examine the mechanisms within local projects by which low income people or their representatives help determine the criteria by which eligible clients are to receive program benefits and the process by which applications for

benefits are handled. This information becomes part of a final report on overall program effectiveness.

Both at the grantee and programmatic levels, evaluation of citizen participation often points up the need for training and technical assistance required by low income representatives in order to play a more influential role in decision-making.

An important new development aimed at this problem is the citizen monitoring project, in which citizens are trained to assess the performance of programs aimed at alleviating their needs. CSA presently supports two such citizen monitoring projects. Under a CSA grant, the Center for Community Change is monitoring the implementation of the community development block grant program in urban areas. A rural counterpart to this effort is administered by Rural America. Both national groups subcontract with local community-based organizations (or even less formalized local coalitions of citizens) for the purpose of examining the performance of local CDBG projects. In the process, citizen groups are being equipped with basic research skills and data-gathering techniques necessary for a reasonably valid assessment of CDBG effectiveness. These citizen assessments serve as the basis for advocacy and involvement aimed at improving program outcomes.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some years ago, the Urban Institute concluded that federal social programs often defied evaluation because they lacked clear goals and objectives. In order to overcome this difficulty, the researchers proposed a phase called the "pre-assessment of evaluability" (Wholey, 1975). During this phase, evaluators would come together with legislators and program managers to arrive at a consensus about program goals and the measures appropriate for evaluation. This approach is used widely in the Department of Health and Human Services and other social service agencies.

If the lack of clear goals and objectives characterizes community service programs in general, it is particularly acute with respect to citizen participation. Thus, prior to launching a multitude of studies into citizen participation, evaluation researchers would be well advised first to conduct formal evaluability assessments that include a wide range of views. Preferably such assessments would be conducted at the time new legislation or rulemaking on citizen participation is being considered, rather than after implementation.

Secondly, well-designed case studies at this juncture may prove more beneficial to the policy-making process than more elaborate experimental and quasi-experimental designs (see Onibokun and Curry, 1976). However, in order for our knowledge

base about citizen participation both to deepen and expand, there should be a clearinghouse in which the findings from discrete case studies can be cumulated and more rigorous typologies and more comparable measures of effectiveness can be developed. It is apparent that the kind and amount of participation in a program must be defined in terms of the program's specific goals, the settings in which it will be carried out, and the stage of readiness among the target population. Even within fairly well-defined parameters--as within the community action program--there is hardly a common pattern of actual participation. More attention needs to be paid not only to the characteristics of the actors involved, but to the overall community profile and the nature of community institutions.

Third, there may be value in seeking out exemplary cases of citizen participation to evaluate. Where citizen participation has been judged successful in both process and impact terms, evaluation would focus on what variables account for this success. Evaluation of exemplary cases would reveal much about the limits and possibilities of citizen participation.

In conclusion, the role of evaluation research could be increasingly prominent in the formation of citizen participation policy and practice. It is clear that evaluation research strategy cannot be left to the evaluators themselves. It must include everyone concerned with this issue. Our experience with citizen participation must be documented and assessed. We must acquire greater theoretical and practical understanding of what works and what does not. If not, we may end with a situation in which citizen participation is a formality, and the administrative decisions of government are left to professional and technocratic personnel.

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Chapter 9

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS AND EVALUATION

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Evaluation of public participation is an issue whose time has come. It appears that public participation, as an area of inquiry, has moved through several stages in arriving at this point. Initially, there was recognition of the citizen's rights and responsibilities for participation in administrative, as opposed to electoral, decision making. The next focus was methods and techniques--the "how-to-do-it" stage. The third stage, evaluation, arises from the accumulation of experience with a variety of issues and participation activities. As this symposium clearly shows, evaluation is beginning to receive attention from the concerned actors: citizens, agency staff and academics. They recognize the need for rigorous inquiry in order to improve the quality of governmental decision making and operations.

The word "evaluation" immediately raises the question "Evaluate what?" Two types of public participation evaluation may be distinguished. First, there are evaluations of the public's response toward the policy under consideration. Second, there are evaluations directed toward the decision-making process.

My purpose here is to distinguish these two types of public participation evaluations, drawing examples from a recent public opinion poll. In addition, I will draw some observations from the experience of using the public opinion survey as an evaluation instrument, cite relevant survey findings, and suggest a related evaluation agenda.

I. THE USDA SURVEY

In discussing the public opinion poll as an evaluation instrument, I would like to begin by describing the setting in which such a survey was conceived. USDA is in the process of developing a national program for conserving soil, water, and related resources. This activity is mandated in Public Law 95-192, the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. That act requires public participation in developing the program. To implement this law, a public participation plan was adopted that includes a nationwide public opinion survey and a comment period

which provides an opportunity for the public to comment on the draft conservation program.

The survey was proposed because it was felt that a request for the public to comment on the draft national conservation program might draw responses primarily from those more directly affected (farmers), while those less directly affected (urban and suburban residents) might not respond. Thus the nationwide survey was designed to reach a representative sample of the adult, non-institutionalized U.S. population. In the survey, conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., 7,010 people were interviewed in their homes. The large sample was needed in order to make reliable comparisons among urban-suburban-town-rural subgroups within each of four natural resource regions into which the country was divided.

As a policy study, the survey was designed to learn the public's attitudes, beliefs, preferences, knowledge, and experience relative to soil, water, and related resources and their conservation. The survey also covered attitudes and values on public participation in federal government decision making. It is this portion of the survey on which this paper focuses.

II. SURVEY RESULTS

The public participaton process is the subject of 20 of the 150 survey questions. Two of thse questions are designed to identify underlying values regarding public participation. These questions offer paired choices on which respondents are asked to show (on a card) the direction in which they felt this country should be moving and how strongly they felt this way. Respondents could indicate "very strongly," "somewhat," "just a little," or "not at all" in favor of one direction or the other. A neutral position is also a possible choice.

One paired choice offers these alternatives: "A country which is willing to put up with some delay in order to let more people have a say in the big decisions," versus "A country which is willing to let a few people make the big decisions in order to get things done quickly." On this pair, 40% of the respondents "very strongly" favor putting up with some delay in order to let more people have a say. Only 7% "very strongly" favor the other direction, "...let a few people make the big decisions in order to get things done quickly." Of the total responses to this paired choice, 70% chose the direction of "...delay,...let more people have a say...," while 18% chose the other direction: "...few people,...get done quickly." An additional 10% were neutral and 2% gave no answer. (N = 6981)

The other paired-choice question relevant to public participation policy is: "A country with few chances for citizens to have a say in government decisions and which doesn't expect its citizens

to give much time to politics" versus "A Country with many chances for citizens to have a say in government decisions, and which expects its citizens to give some time to politics." Here the response was even stronger. Over one-half (52%) of the respondents "very strongly" favor "A country with many chances for citizens to have a say in government decisions...." Only 4% felt "very strongly" that the country should be moving toward one with "few chances...to have a say in government decisions...." Of the total responses to this pair, eight out of ten were in the direction "...many chances for citizens to have a say...." Only one in ten chose the opposite direction "...few chances...." The neutral position was taken by 8%, and two percent gave no answer. (N = 6984)

These results seem to indicate very strong endorsement of public participation and recognition of the citizen's responsibility.

Later in the survey a third question asked: "How important do you feel it is for average citizens to be directly represented when federal agencies and departments make decisions about...?" The question continued with seven USDA program responsibilities. For each of the seven programs a majority said it was "very important" that average citizens be directly represented. Highest "very important" response rates were given to questions on food programs. That is, 82% said it is "very important" that the average citizen be directly represented in decision making about the safety and quality of the food you eat; 77% in making sure there is an adequate supply; 68% in making rules which control how food is priced and sold; 64% in food programs for the needy. Non-food decisions (natural resources, rural development and research) garnered "very important" responses ranging from 51% to 57%. The indication here is that people feel it is very important for average citizens to be directly represented in federal agency decision making, but that some issues are more pertinent than others.

The fourth participation question relates to intervenor funding, or reimbursement of participant expenses. Respondents were asked whether the federal government should provide "financial help to individuals and groups so they can participate in government decision making." The answers are:

Should do this	46%
Should not do this	39%
Not sure	14%
No answer/refused	1%
(N = 7007)	

These questions and responses provide valuable insights into public participation that could help shape participation policy at the national level. Results of these questions may, therefore, be regarded as citizen evaluations of public participation in federal government decision making.

Earlier in this paper the strong endorsement for public participation was reported. This endorsement, however, is not matched by equal action. When asked, "Have you personally done anything, either on your own or as part of a group, such as write a letter, go to a public meeting, go to a demonstration, or talk to an official to try to influence any policy or program of the federal government?" only 33% said "yes." (N = 7003)

A clue to this comparatively low participation rate may be found in answers to questions designed to identify factors that might prompt more participation. More than 70% of the respondents say they would participate "much more" in federal government decisions on policies and programs if "the effects of these decisions...were more direct" or "if you knew you were really listened to, even though you might not get your way." Another clue to participation rates is offered by answers to a question on understanding the decision-making process. Here only 9% say they "fully understand" how to influence a decision made by departments and agencies of the executive branch of the federal government. At the same time, almost 4 people in 10 (38%) say they "hardly understand at all" how to do this. (N = 7002)

Another process-related question asked: "Some people are interested in getting directly involved in the decisions made by departments and agencies of the federal government. Other people are not so interested in doing this. Which one of the choices on this card best represents your own feelings about this?" The responses were:

--I'd like the government to provide me detailed explanations of the problems and proposed solutions.....18%
--I'd like the government to provide me brief summaries of the problems and proposed solutions.....26%
--I'd like the government to provide me information that tells where to get more detailed facts about the problems and proposed solutions.....28%
--All the information I need from the government is what agencies are in charge of certain problems and if I'm interested, I'll call them.....21%
--Not sure.....6%
--No answer/refused.....1%

Those who plan for public participation may find that the survey results discussed here are useful guides. According to the survey, the public is willing to put up with some delay in order for people to have a say in big decisions. Participatory decision making requires a realistic amount of time for informing the public as well as time for people to respond. In view of the survey finding that the public prefers many chances, rather than few chances, for a citizen to have a say, government agencies should offer multiple opportunities for participation where

possible. However, decision makers must remember that it remains the citizen's right to decide whether or not to participate.

If officials want to increase participation, they might (based on survey findings) try the following:

1) Give the public brief summaries about the problem and proposed solutions, and tell the public how to get more detailed information;
2) Tell people the potential, direct effects on them and their families of the proposed decisions;
3) Explain the decision-making process and how the public can affect it; and
4) Give the public feedback showing how their views were used in the decision making.

In sum, the survey questions and responses provide valuable insights into public participation that can help shape participation plans and programs.

III. CONCLUSIONS

It may be useful to draw some observations that may aid others who are considering a survey as an evaluation technique. These observations are the result of the writer's responsibilities as USDA manager of the survey contract.

1) Be very clear about the purpose of the survey. Carefully state exactly what are the goals of the survey, what variables are to be measured, what is to be evaluated, and how the results are to be used. A clear justification statement is a valuable disciplinary instrument and can serve the evaluator in a very positive way.

2) Be sure the survey is designed to produce data that are needed and wanted by decision makers. The survey manager will need to build into the survey planning process sufficient time and checkpoints so that decision makers can carefully review draft survey questionnaires. With the USDA survey, the staff group laid out the elements of the study, contract specifications, and (with the contractor) the survey questions. USDA decision makers, in turn, revised and approved the study elements, contract specifications and survey questions. As a result, the decision makers had an investment in the survey designed to pose questions that they felt would be significant.

3) Ask survey respondents about those items which they are able to evaluate. Not many people in this country are able to give a meaningful evaluation of 34 USDA programs for conserving soil, water, and related resources.

Therefore, respondents were not asked to do this. People can, however, respond with opinions, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, experiences, and facts on appropriate, relevant topics with which they are acquainted. It becomes the task of the evaluator to link these responses to the policy questions at hand.

The USDA experience demonstrates that, in evaluating policy issues and the participation process itself, a public opinion survey can be a useful tool. In combination with other means of evaluation, surveys can point the way toward more effective participation processes.

Chapter 10

AN AGENCY PERSPECTIVE ON EVALUATION

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Public involvement program evaluation is in its infancy. With notable exceptions, comprehensive and systematic public involvement evaluations in natural and water resource agencies are scarce. From a federal agency perspective, I want to suggest several important categories and questions that should be addressed in public involvement program evaluation.

This paper discusses the objectives of public involvement programs as well as utilization of public involvement evaluation studies.

I. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives may be conceived as the central ends of public involvement:

a. To enhance the accountability of government decisions;
b. To build consensus by resolving conflict;
c. To enhance the legitimacy of government decision-making;
d. To inform the public;
e. To build trust between client citizens and government producers of services.

Obviously these objectives are broad, nondiscrete, and difficult to evaluate. In any program, all, some, none or a few might be achieved. They may be congruent or conflicting. But taken together, they express major public commitments to democratizing the administrative process.

Representativeness is often confused with accountability criteria in evaluating public involvement. As a public policy end, public involvement builds on the belief that those affected by decisions should have influence on such decisions. In our society, voting primarily services this belief. Theoretically, the vote offers the opportunity for either recall or confirmation. However, increasingly important decisions that affect our lives, such as planning, are made within administrative agencies. But how is such bureaucratic decision-making accountable? Elected officials often avoid raising controversies about the future that are not currently issues. Public involvement programs can force elected officials to take such leadership stands early, by raising

future issues in legitimate public forums. Because future-oriented planning decisions represent critical social choices, public involvement thus aids the representative political system to work better. Public involvement is not a competing representative system seeking to "end run" established political procedures. Rather, involvement seeks to enhance that representative system by nurturing the elected officials' sensitivity and accountability to social consequences of congressionally authorized bureaucratic action.

Public involvement is often viewed as an "either-or" proposition--either you resolve the conflicts or fail. However, conflict resolution is not the only public involvement goal. Agreeing on areas of disagreement can be an important accomplishment in itself. In some cases, public involvement might produce increased conflict, yet it may be possible to use increased conflict positively if it occurs. Absence of visible conflict is not always a sign of good public involvement; it may indicate a poorly run program which includes a homogeneous but narrow range of participating values. If all is quiet on a controversial project, something is wrong! The surfacing of conflict can actually be an indicator of public involvement program vitality.

The critical management task for public involvement is to encourage conflict resolution processes which create rewards for middle ground trade-offs. Unfortunately, our obsession with going to court often enhances, rather than reduces, conflict. In court one must be "for" or "against." If our only view of conflict resolution is "to go to court," you can be assured that the process will emphasize the extremes and moderation will disappear.

Enhancing the legitimacy of government decision-making processes is a crucial public involvement end. During a recent public workshop in the South, one landowner shouted, "Save America, kill a bureaucrat." This was followed by a local football coach's question: "Am I wasting my time? Will my participation make a difference?" Clearly, legitimacy issues are alive and well! One experienced public involvement specialist states:

> In every closely fought election, nearly half the voters "lose"--their candidate isn't elected--yet the outcome of the election is accepted because there is consensus that the decision-making process has been fair and legitimate. In effect, the decision-making procedure or process--the election--makes the outcome legitimate even if someone didn't like the outcome. One of the major functions of public involvement is to create sufficient visibility to the decision-making process so that decisions which result from it are perceived as fair and legitimate. While some of the people most directly impacted by a decision may not be impressed by the equity of a decision, their ability to undermine the credibility of the decisions rests on their ability to convince the larger public that the decision wasy unfairly made. Effective

> public involvement can establish your credibility with the larger public, so that the claims of special interests fall on deaf ears. (Creighton, 1978)

Providing visibility and traceability of decisions to the public is critical to enhancing legitimacy. Both are closely related to the central governmental responsibility of informing the public. If the public understands why things work the way they do, and how decisions are made, they are more likely to be supportive of agency policies. When they do disagree, they are more likely to disagree from an informed base which lends itself to conflict resolution.

Evaluators consequently must examine how information flow to and from the public affects the quality of agency decisions; traceability; visibility; and trust relationships among citizens and officials.

II. UTILIZING EVALUATION STUDIES

Generally speaking, evaluation studies of specific participation techniques and methods have been more heavily utilized and had more influence on the Corps than more abstract and general studies of policy impacts and/or participant effects. Early program-level evaluations in the Corps resulted in technical assistance programs to Districts and, eventually, to a comprehensive national training program. Specific successful techniques have been recognized and their applications encouraged in other projects. Technology transfer among Districts has been achieved through the national training program and through informal networks among professionals responsible for such activity.

In those few cases where individual Districts have sponsored public involvement evaluation, those evaluation studies have had a major impact. For example, public meeting techniques have been compared to public hearings in terms of cost, information generated and participant satisfaction. Such evaluations have led to restructuring of District programs--i.e., budgeting, public notice, staff behavior, and so on. In some cases, follow-up questionnaires have been employed to assess both continued agreement with decisions taken and satisfaction with the public involvement process.

A series of evaluations in one Corps District has raised the question of using non-Corps intermediaries in public involvement programs. On the one hand, the District believed that to be viable, public involvement must be done by Corps staff. However, comparative evaluations of programs pointed to a need for a "credible" third party to translate Corps intentions to the environmental community. Consequently, the District is now focusing on ways to use "intermediaries" to build enough initial trust so that a Corps-initiated process can, at least, be attempted.

One danger that has arisen in District-level utilization of

evaluation studies is that a particular technique, such as small group workshops, can become over-used. That is, demonstration of its success in one context can spur District enthusiasm and over-generalization to inappropriate contexts. This problem is largely a function of single-District evaluations. As comparative and multi-District evaluations develop, misapplication of evaluation findings should diminish.

Evaluative studies of policy impact have had less influence upon Corps behavior, principally because a) the findings are clear or conclusive and b) there remains some substantive uncertainty about how information on public attitudes gathered in the involvement process should affect decisions. Recent evaluative studies show that the impact of the public on major decisions is unclear. This finding is not at all surprising. Utilization of information generated by public involvement raises crucial questions for public works decisions. Over the past ten years, water resources planning has evolved into a multiple-objective balancing process based upon an elaborate system of quantitative accounting. This system is designed to provide a means by which agencies can document and recommend to Congress projects that meet some overall conception of interest. Public involvement often illicits crucial information about local concerns, probable local acceptance and local implementability of alternative plans. However, in a system that still heavily emphasizes national economic accounting, it is not clear that local preferences should necessarily dominate decision-making.

A number of formal and informal evaluations have recognized the problem that public involvement information might be crucial to local concerns but not adaptable to the currently-employed public interest planning methodology. Consequently, such information takes low precedence within the review process. Thus, utilization of public involvement evaluation studies confronts the Corps, as other agencies, with the dilemma of integrating local implementation decisions to national income accounting.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Public involvement is more than an operational means to public policy ends. Our concern for this issue is a reflection of deeply held social values--views of how the world ought to be. Designing, participating in, and evaluating public involvement is all part of the continual unfolding of an inherited democratic faith. I think this should both excite and frustrate evaluators. There are few public policy activities where both the need for, and limits to, purely rational inquiry coexist so clearly.

The major revolution of the 1970s was not the movement for environmental quality or the energy crisis. Rather, it was the participatory revolution. Public involvement evaluation can help determine how successfully we have met this revolution's challenge to renovate public trust in government.

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